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BOMBAY  
TODAY AND TOMORROW





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# BOMBAY

## TODAY AND TOMORROW

*Eight Lectures by*

A. R. Dalal	John McKenzie
J. R. Glorney Bolton	Fred Stones
M. R. Jayakar	S. C. Joshi
K. Natarajan	Clifford Manshardt

*Edited by*

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His Excellency Major-General the Right Hon. Sir Frederick Sykes,  
P. C., G. C. I. E., G. B. E., K. C. B., C. M. G.,  
Governor of Bombay.

BOMBAY:  
D. B. TARAPOREVALA SONS & Co.  
“KITAB MAHAL”: HORNBY ROAD

*The Edition is limited to one thousand copies*

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BY

D. B. TARAPOREVALA SONS & CO.  
BOMBAY

Printed by FR. RAULEDER  
at the Basel Mission Press and Book Depot Mangalore S. K.  
and Published by Vicaji D. B. Taraporevala  
for D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co ,  
190, Hornby Road, Bombay.

## INTRODUCTION

By His Excellency

Major-General the Right Hon'ble Sir Frederick Sykes,

P.C., G.C.I.E., G.B.E., K.C.B., C.M.G.,

Governor of Bombay.

The idea of stimulating thought upon the relationship of all classes of the community to the City in which they live has the merit both of novelty and utility and should serve to focus attention on a number of very important aspects of the life of the City.

The City of Bombay is no mean City. You may remember Kipling's description of it in his "Song of the Cities"—

"Royal and Dower Royal. I the Queen  
Fronting thy richest sea with richer hands.  
A thousand mills roar through me where I glean  
All races from all lands."

To the Government and to the Municipality, struggling to make both ends meet, to the commercial community in the throes of bad trade, and to the individual social reformer working against heavy odds, this description may appear a little too enthusiastic, but Bombay has passed through bad times before, and temporary set-backs have not prevented her from achieving great strides in the past and attaining the commanding position she holds today, not only in India but in the world; and I have no doubt that our troubles are but a phase from which the City will emerge to go on to better and better conditions of life and to even greater glory and prosperity.

Reference to the past serves to remind me that little seems to have been done to study the history of Bombay in the way that, for example, Stowe and Besant studied the history of London.

The first named's Survey of London, written away back in the early years of the seventeenth century, has proved a wonderful mine of information, not only topographical, but also social and economic. Since his day numerous writers have kept the story up to date, and there are many societies in London which stimulate interest in the City and keep a vigilant eye on the activities of public bodies in case they should destroy objects worthy of preservation.

Compared with the City of London, the history of Bombay is very recent. But it should be closely studied and recorded, and interest in it stimulated, so that generations yet to come, resident as we believe they will be in a City better and even greater and more powerful than that which exists today, shall know and appreciate what was done by their predecessors for posterity. Thus they will be able to visualise the way in which they lived, the conditions under which they worked, and the changes that time has brought about. Revolutionary changes tend in a few years to become so merged into the life of the City that their origins are forgotten. How many people today, for example, realise what Bombay owes to the Improvement Trust, and understand how radical were the changes it made in the configuration of the City and in the welfare of its citizens? Yet the Trust has had less than thirty years of existence, for it was not until after the plague epidemic of 1897 that the Government of Bombay took into consideration the question of a comprehensive scheme for the improvement of the City, more especially in respect of the better ventilation of the densely inhabited parts, the removal of insanitary buildings, the prevention of overcrowding, the improvement of communications so as to make the outlying lands more easily accessible, and the creation of new building estates laid out and developed on the best up-to-date sanitary lines.

Nor is it realised, I think, that the area of the lands comprised in the Trust schemes is about 20 per cent. of the total area of the City, and that accommodation has been provided on the Board's estates for about 125,000 people, while more than 40

miles of roads have been completed. If one thinks of the work that has been done, not only by the Trust but also by the Municipality and Government in this direction, and then considers how much still remains to be done, one shudders to think how appalling must have been the places that have disappeared. The average number of people living on each acre of ground in the greater part of the City is 400 and more. In some districts the density is nearly 800 per acre, and despite the development of the suburbs, the Municipal Commissioner's report shows that congestion is not decreasing but rather increasing; while those of us who have had an opportunity of seeing the conditions under which so many of the workers live feel—and feel strongly—that a programme of wholesale slum clearance cannot be long delayed.

Another matter that has struck me very forcibly during the time that I have been in Bombay has been the lack of interest in the social and economic conditions of the people displayed by the great majority of its citizens. Leaving aside Professor Burnet Hurst's book, it appears that almost the only statistical and social records of the life of the working classes are to be found in the publications of the Labour Office, a Department of Government. Economic studies similar to those made by Charles Booth and his friends and used in his monumental work upon the conditions of the poor in London, do not appear to have been made in Bombay. It is true that there are many devoted social workers in the city, and one of your studies deals with that aspect of civic life, while another deals with the labour in the City. But I think we ought to have something more than this, studies and enquiries undertaken by economists and social workers acting together: something that will give us a really reliable picture of the conditions under which the vast majority of the citizens of Bombay live and work. To any such effort I am sure the Municipality, which is so vitally interested in the health and economics of its citizens, will give assistance.

There are many aspects of city life which require and deserve study. Take for example, Unemployment. The industrial popula-

tion of this City is not stable. The last Census figures show that only 16 per cent. of the residents were born within its boundaries. There is a constant ebb and flow from Ratnagiri, Kolaba, Satara, Thana and other places, within and without the Presidency, into and out of the City by people in search of work or returning to their villages. Some of them come here with a promise of employment, but the great majority probably come only with the hope of it. We know very little to what extent their hopes are fulfilled, but it is clear that there must be a certain number—it may be only 5,000, it may be five times as many—who are unsuccessful, and investigation into this problem might give interesting results. Again, what is greatly needed is a growth, in the population, of civic responsibility for bettering conditions.

Or take Education, which many of us believe to be the main solution of many of the problems connected with the life of the City. We know something of the extent to which education is imparted, the number of pupils that pass through the schools, the standard which they have attained. What we do not know is the extent to which the education they have received is retained or whether it is allowed to rust from disuse, and if that be so, what steps should be taken to ensure that primary education is not wasted. If your citizens are illiterate, the civic consciousness and the sense of civic responsibility are slow to grow, because those qualities do not spring solely from the exercise of the franchise at long and irregular intervals. Moreover, civic responsibility is best understood by those to whom the City has given decent conditions of life and labour. Mass psychology, to those who have studied it, is both a wonderful and a terrible phenomenon, and the worst aspects of it are seen where it is stimulated by poverty, disease and dirt. Such stimulants, I fear, are not absent in this great City of ours, and it should be the task of all of us to do all we can to sweep them away and to save the workers from those who, by skilful play upon their misery, sway them to destruction.

I am well aware of the difficulties, for the Government has

encountered them. Bombay has many advantages: its disadvantages are obvious. Geographically, its restricted area makes expansion difficult, and tends to congestion and consequent overcrowding. Economically, it depends for its existence on one great industry, Cotton, which is subjected to fierce competition from outside, and disorganised by internal strife. The life of Bombay is bound up in its mills, and it seems to me that far more should be known than is known of the economic conditions of the industry and of the workers whom it supports.

Bombay has always been known for the generosity of its citizens. Our hospitals and our schools are almost all of them associated with the name of some generous man or woman who has given of the wealth he has gained from the City to the benefit of the poor, the sick and the illiterate among his fellow citizens; while the response to the Governor's Hospital Fund and to the Sind Relief Fund has clearly shown that that spirit of charity and generosity is still alive. I think that the purses of the rich would be opened wider still if the channels into which charity should be diverted were well known and understood.

These are but a few preliminary thoughts in introducing this series of papers. I do not desire to touch upon the many aspects which will be dealt with by experts in their particular sphere. I hope that these studies will be, as they deserve to be, productive of much good.

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## FOREWORD

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The "Building a Better City" series of lectures, which was held at the Nagpada Neighbourhood House during the cold weather season of 1929-30, was undertaken with the purpose of revealing the strength and weakness of our common life, with the hope that practical suggestions might be made for properly capitalising the potential elements of strength, and reconstructing, or in some cases completely eradicating, the elements of weakness. It was also hoped that by bringing together speakers representing different cross sections of Bombay life, it would be possible to promote mutual understanding—an understanding which might lead to increased co-operation, without which no city can attain to greatness.

The series raised more problems than it settled, but in doing so it rendered a distinct service, for a problem must be clearly revealed before it can be solved. It also, however, elicited a considerable body of constructive suggestions, which can well be pondered by all who are interested in the city's welfare.

The papers presented in this volume are the original addresses delivered in the series. Unfortunately, two of the addresses were not written out, and the stenographic report may not do the speakers full justice. Slight changes have also been made in converting the original spoken form into essay form.

Thanks are due to His Excellency the Governor of Bombay, both for help rendered in arranging the series and for giving of valuable time to participate in it; to the other speakers in the series; and to the gentlemen who so kindly presided at the various lectures, viz., Mr. Meyer Nissim, the Hon'ble Justice Mirza A. A. Khan, Mr. A. R. Dimtimkar, the late Dewan Bahadur A. K. Pai, and the Hon'ble Justice G. D. Madgaokar.

It is believed that the readers of this volume will find it as stimulating as were the original lectures.



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# BOMBAY TODAY AND TOMORROW

## CHAPTER I

### “THE MUNICIPALITY AND THE CITIZEN”

BY

MR. A. R. DALAL, I. C. S.

Municipal Commissioner for the City of Bombay.

The object of this series of papers is to bring the different sections and interests of this great city into closer touch with one another in order to promote mutual understanding and an appreciation of the higher values of life in our city. It is believed that if the various problems of the city and its government are explained to the citizen, the citizen will be helped towards the realisation of his own responsibilities for a better city. It is by mutual understanding and co-operation alone that the goal of a higher civic life can be reached and discord and conflicts, such as those we have recently passed through, disappear from our city forever.

“Municipal institutions constitute the strength of free nations,” says De Tocqueville. “A nation may establish a system of free Government but without municipal institutions it cannot have the spirit of liberty.” Etymologically, and to a large extent in actual fact, civilization and politics take their root in the city. The city may rightly be regarded as the

cradle of democracy and perhaps its home. It is the laboratory of representative government. Representative government is there put to the severest test, for it is with municipal government that people come most directly and continuously in contact; it has most to do with the ordering of their lives and for its maintenance they make very large contributions. As Bryce says in his *Modern Democracies*: "The best school of democracy and the best guarantee for its success is the practice of local self-government. For good or otherwise, this country has made a start on the highroad of democracy and it behooves us, therefore, to be very watchful to see that its foundations are well and truly laid in the efficient conduct of local self-government." As self-government rests on the will of the people, efficient self-government of a city postulates citizens capable of formulating a policy calculated to promote the welfare of the city and seeing that it is properly carried out by their representatives and officers. When such government carries out the will of an enlightened people accurately, efficiently and economically, it may be said to have realised its purpose. Before examining how far the government of the city of Bombay fulfils these conditions, I desire to sketch very briefly the history of the introduction of the popular element in the government of the city:—

It was as early as 1792 that power was given by Act of Parliament to the Governor-General to appoint Justices of the Peace "for clearing the streets of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay and to order their being washed and repaired, and further to make assess-

ments for those purposes." After a number of vicissitudes, by Bombay Act II of 1865, the Justices of Peace were created a body corporate with perpetual succession and common seal and the power to hold lands, etc. This was the first Municipal Corporation. In response to public agitation, and mainly owing to the powerful advocacy of the late Pherozeshah Mehta, then a rising young Barrister, the Act of 1865 was amended by the Act of 1872, under which the Corporation consisted of 64 members, 32 of whom were elected by the ratepayers and 16 by the Justices of the Peace, while 16 were nominated by Government. This was the first introduction of the electoral element into the government of Bombay City. By Bombay Act III of 1888, by which the Municipality is still governed, the number of members was raised to 72 of which 36 were elected by the wards, 16 by the Justices of Peace, 2 by the Fellows of the University, 2 by the Chamber of Commerce and 16 were nominated by Government. This remained the constitution of the Corporation till 1922. Though 36 out of 72 members were elected, the franchise was restricted to those who paid the municipal rates and taxes, i. e., mainly to the landlords. It was by Act VI of 1922 under the Reformed Government, that the number of members was increased from 72 to 106, of which 76 were elected by voters and the franchise was extended to tenants paying a monthly rent of not less than Rs. 10/-. The democratic government of the city may thus be said to begin from 1922. By Act X of 1928, the number was increased to 108,



room being made for 4 representatives elected by registered trade unions. The earliest records of the Municipality show that in 1889-90, the number of voters was 7,865. In 1920-21, the last election before the introduction of the Rs. 10/- franchise, the number was 13,940. In 1922-23, after the introduction of Rs. 10/- franchise, the number on the electoral rolls was 75,065 of which 24,533 voted. At the election of 1925-26, the number on the rolls was 117,861 of which 47,588 voted, while at the last elections of 1928-29 the number on the rolls was 120,495 of which 75,426 exercised their right to vote. The fact that as many as 62·5 per cent. of the electorate went to the polls, is evidence of keen interest in civic affairs on the part of the citizens, even when allowance is made for a certain amount of personation, the existence of which cannot unfortunately be denied. The fact, however, remains that the majority of the electorate is still illiterate. To enable them to vote, each candidate has to be identified by means of a symbol and votes are mostly given out of personal consideration affecting the candidate rather than for the policy he represents. The electors do not vote on any clear-cut issues of principle or policy regarding city government or on well-defined lines of party. It is not possible for an electorate to exercise their franchise wisely unless they know the real forces, latent and active, within the city, that make for or against the well-being—moral, physical, industrial or political—of the citizen. The people must be informed before they can be consulted about public affairs. “Before

he can vote, he must hear the evidence," says H. G. Wells in his *Outline of History*. "Before he can decide, he must know . . . . Votes in themselves are useless things. Men had votes in Italy in the time of the Gracchi. Their votes did not help them. Until a man has education a vote is a useless and dangerous thing for him to possess. The ideal community towards which we move is not a community of will simply; it is a community of knowledge and will replacing a community of faith and obedience."

The only way to overcome ignorance in public affairs is to educate our masters and to develop in them a municipal consciousness. In the absence of such municipal consciousness, of well-founded knowledge of civic affairs, the citizen, even though he may possess the vote and exercise it once in three years, does not feel himself an integral part of the civic life. The civic administration appears to him to be an incomprehensible machine with its notices and regulations, its rates and its taxes. He has a vivid realisation of the burdens of civic life with a very incomplete appreciation of the benefits he gets in return. The result is a tendency to invest the Executive, which means the Commissioner, with almost superhuman attributes, mainly for evil, and to blame him for every mishap or ill that may befall the city. Thus we have recently seen him made the target of rebuke for the failure of the last monsoon. The emphasis is too much upon the responsibility of the official and too little upon the responsibility of the citizen. The remedy for this state of affairs lies

in more publicity, better and more well-informed publicity, systematic training in the art of local self-government and the creation of an organisation to maintain a continuous day to day contact with the various aspects of civic affairs and the agencies through which they are conducted.

It is not my intention to assert that municipal affairs do not receive any publicity at present. Because they come so close to the business and bosoms of men, they inevitably receive a certain measure of publicity. Both the English and the Vernacular press play their part in this respect. I confess that I felt somewhat uncomfortable in the beginning, when from the secluded and almost cloistered atmosphere of the Secretariat, I found myself transferred to the fierce glare of publicity on taking up the duties of the Municipal Commissioner. But this is not enough. What is wanted is not spasmodic effort, but a sustained and continuous attempt to educate and interest the public into the problems of local self-government, somewhat on the lines of the work in American cities which I shall outline later on. At the present moment, with a very few exceptions, most of the criticisms of municipal affairs are on destructive rather than constructive lines. The latest constructive suggestion to remedy the water scarcity that I have received, came from a gentleman who proposed that the sea water from Bombay Harbour should be converted into sweet water by machinery which should be obtained without a moment's delay by means of the R101 !

I understand there is in existence a Municipal Reforms Association which was founded in 1917. Whatever might have been its achievements in the past, that body seems to be in a state of suspended animation at present. There used to be a Ratepayers' Association once upon a time, but it seems to have expired long ago. Of the organisations representing the interests of particular groups, there is a Bombay Landlords' Association established in 1924, which confined its energies principally to agitation against the Rent Act. There was similarly a Bombay Tenants' Association which took a prominent part in agitating for the Rent Act and prolonging its existence, but it seems to have expired with the expiry of that Act.

It is plain that an occasional vote, cast at election times, does not provide the environment to which plain men can adapt themselves in the process of acquiring social truths. This process must go on from day to day. Experience has everywhere shown that where the public is not helped to understand, not only will it misunderstand and mistrust government conducted by experts, but those very experts themselves very often acquire contempt for the public's ability and right to understand expert government. As far as I am aware, it is in America that the most fruitful and the best organised efforts have been made for establishing a living contact between the people and the agencies of local self-government by means of organisations which may be divided into four groups, viz.,

(1) Those whose chief function is to train persons for public service.

(2) Those which study the needs of cities and make suggestions.

(3) Those which bring city officials and experts together for discussion of municipal problems and interchange of ideas.

(4) Those which supply information about municipal activities.

(1) The training of men and women in America for the service of local self-government as well as for social service, has been undertaken on a systematic basis. Many universities have special courses in this subject.

(2) In the second group are Bureaus, Institutions and Commissions of Municipal Research. The chief point about them is that they are supported by groups of citizens, Chambers of Commerce and other civic organisations. They depend upon the public opinion they create to force city governments to adopt their programmes and suggestions. At the instance of Sir M. Visvesvaraya, we have recently started a Municipal Research Bureau; but a purely official organisation of this character cannot do much. What is wanted is an organisation on American lines, financed mainly by the public and patronised by the public working in co-operation with the Municipal Councillors and the Municipal Executive.

(3) In the third group may be placed large Municipal organisations on a national scale such as the National Municipal League, the League of American

Municipalities, the American Society for Municipal Improvements and the Union of Canadian Municipalities. These organisations bring experts and city officials together to study Municipal problems, to suggest remedies and to recommend improvements.

(4) The fourth group, which supplies information about municipal activities, consists of Municipal Reference Libraries and Municipal Bureaus maintained by Universities and cities. The best known of these Bureaus is the New York State Bureau of Municipal Information which acts as a clearing-house of information on all Municipal matters and thus eliminates duplication of work and waste of effort.

Another means adopted in America for the awakening of the interest of the citizen in civic affairs, is by what are known as 'community centres'. The community centre first cultivates the leisure interests of the people. Through discussion, through drama and through other collective expressions it gradually modifies their bent of feeling and creates an atmosphere and environment suitable to an appreciation and absorption of social truths. In short, it creates the civic mentality. A typical community centre of this kind brings together on a common platform groups of citizens interested in different activities and with the co-operation of the Municipal Officers and through the means of lectures, cinemas, etc., creates in them an interest in civic affairs. A centre of this kind runs a night school, a labour centre, a social clinic for un-adjusted children, together with a community clearing-house for employment. It links up the various groups

composing it into one neighbourhood. The Nagpada Neighbourhood House, here in Bombay, may be regarded as the nucleus of an organisation on these lines. We have in this Presidency a Local Self-Government Institute which has set before it some of the objects which I have just described. Its field of activity, however, embraces the whole Presidency and by the very nature of its organisation, it is concerned more with the problems of local self-government in areas such as Taluka and District Local Boards than with the problems of a large municipality like Bombay. What, in my humble opinion, Bombay needs in this direction, is the creation of one or more organisations confined to Bombay alone for the dissemination of municipal information and the discussion of civic problems. According to the measure of its strength and utility, such a body will be able to influence civic policy and to exercise a wholesome supervision over the doings of the Councillors and the Executive. So far as the present Municipal Corporation is concerned, I trust that it will not be deemed supererogatory on my part to state that the problems of the city are, as a rule, discussed from the civic point of view alone, unbiased by considerations of State politics. We have recently devised a system of weekly ward inspections under which the representatives of each ward and any other Councillors who may so desire, accompany me on a personal inspection of one ward every week where we can ascertain the needs and grievances of the people on the spot. This, I submit, is a move in the direction of bringing the

people, their representatives and their Executive into direct contact, but for continuous and systematic training of the people in the study of municipal problems, an organisation on the lines suggested above appears to me to be necessary. Such an organisation must be powerful enough to represent the public opinion of Bombay City. In the absence of any such organised expression of public opinion, the hands of the Municipality are bound to be weakened in the pursuit of any policy which is likely to be unpopular with a section of the people. As instances, I may quote the Malaria Prevention Policy as approved by the Corporation and the problem of dealing with hawkers and those who obstruct public streets. The malaria question has been discussed too often to bear repetition here; but with regard to the hawkers and those who obstruct public streets, I may say that keen as both the Commissioner of Police and myself are to alleviate the hardships to the shop-keepers and those using the public thoroughfares, we find ourselves unable to do much unless we find we have the general public opinion in our favour.

Another direction in which public support may considerably help the Corporation and the Municipal Executive is that of the clearance of slums. The Municipality, in common with the Improvement Trust and the Development Department, has spent large sums of money and incurred heavy liabilities for the clearing and development of insanitary areas. Nevertheless, it remains a sad fact that while thousands of sanitary rooms constructed at heavy cost are lying



vacant, a substantial section of the population of the city is huddled together in dark, ill-ventilated and insanitary tenements. The Municipality is pursuing the policy of closing down such tenements or getting them remodelled on sanitary lines, but here also, it has to contend against vested interests; and the vigour with which this policy is pursued will depend in a large measure upon the extent of the support the Executive receives not merely from the Corporation but from the public. This is particularly a direction in which those interested in the welfare of labour in the city may co-operate with the Municipal Executive.

A great deal is now being heard about retrenchment in the course of the public discussion of the Municipal Budget. The subject is not merely of theoretical interest to the citizen, for it is one that touches his pocket. It is stated that the burden of Municipal taxation in Bombay is heavier than that of any other city in India. That may be admitted at once. But the efficiency of Municipal administration cannot be assessed by a mere comparison of figures of taxation per head. I submit that the value which a citizen of Bombay receives for the taxes he pays in the shape of the various amenities such as roads, drains, light, water supply, sanitation, etc., is at least as good as, if not better than, the value received by the citizens of any other city in India. We spend about 30 lakhs a year on Primary Education as compared with the 6 lakhs of the Calcutta Municipality and 4 lakhs of the Madras Municipality. We have a longer mileage of asphalted roads than any other

city in India. Our expenditure on medical relief has nearly doubled during the last five years. We are proud of the fact that in the K. E. M. Hospital we maintain one of the best and most well-equipped Hospitals in India. A point I should like to emphasize in view of recent events, is that we treat our labour staff with a fairness and generosity which will stand comparison with any other body in India. The majority of our labour staff is housed in municipal chawls either rent-free or for payment of very nominal rents. Special disability leave is granted to the labourers and artisans in case of injury received in the course of duty. For employees drawing less than Rs. 100/- per month, a provision for old age is made in the shape of gratuities. There is besides the Provident Fund on a voluntary basis for the benefit of Municipal Officers and servants, including labourers, whether permanent or temporary. The Municipality contributes at the rate of 100 per cent. on the subscribers' contributions and allows interest at 5 per cent. per annum. In the case of the death of an employee, the gratuities are paid to his relatives. It is thus seen, that while paying due regard to economy, we have not been unmindful of the needs of our employees, particularly those belonging to the labouring classes, nor have we failed to provide for the amenities of the City up to the limit of our resources.

I have brought forward the above facts in order to place the case of the Municipality in its proper perspective, but it is far from my intention to assert that there is no scope for further retrenchment in the

Municipality. The Corporation are keenly alive to this necessity and co-operate with me in my efforts at retrenchment. If on rare occasions this co-operation is halting or is not forthcoming, it is because of one of the features of modern democracies, which is not confined to this city or this country alone, viz., the pressure of vested interests and apprehension of losing one's seat by offending individuals or groups of individuals capable of influencing elections. It is here that the voice of organised public opinion can best make itself felt by insisting upon economy and calling to strict account, at election time, the conduct of those who side with vested interests in any shape or form as against the interests of the city.

■

## CHAPTER II

# "THE NEWSPAPER AND THE CITY"

By

MR. J. R. GLORNEY BOLTON

*(of The Times of India.)*

Every actor loves a play, and every preacher a sermon. Naturally, one supposes that every journalist loves a newspaper. But is this true? Consider for one moment the trials of a journalist's life. He must work at all hours of the day—and night. In India, he is lucky, he starts his day's work at ten in the morning; but in England, as likely as not, he starts work at ten in the evening. At that apparently peaceful hour, when honest and sober people are going to bed, the journalist is re-entering the field of his daily activities. "A stirring thrills the air." From the top floor there floats the noise of more than one hundred linotypes. In the floor below sub-editors hurriedly prepare to-morrow's news, bringing intelligence to bear upon the dullest reports—not, as the cynics imagine, making "confusions worse confounded." Along the corridors strut reporters and special correspondents, who must move as though their work will never be done. Copy boys leap from room to room, as though they were sending messages that shall decide whether whole continents go to war or remain at peace. And even in the editorial sanctum there is a disorder that must distress the onlooker who possesses that quality rare

among journalists—a tidy mind. Papers from all parts of the country—even all parts of Europe—have been searched and then scattered over the floor. For of what use is a waste paper basket in a room where the daily waste paper weighs many pounds? The leader-writers—freed, perhaps, from the burden of very definite opinions of their own, priding themselves upon their open-mindedness, and yet conscious that what they have written will be repeated to them by the dullest acquaintances they may meet at dinner, in the railway carriage or the club—the leader-writers are at the moment searching desperately for suitable objects on which they may write and express their views without unduly offending their readers—doctors, barmaids, solicitors, schoolmasters, politicians, policemen, clergymen, insurance clerks, bankers, visitors from abroad: the whole world in short. Or is it true that the writers of leading articles cannot legitimately claim any readers at all? Only on the ground floor, where the gigantic printing machines lie in waiting, is there comparative peace. But not for long. Within a few hours the printing machines will commence to roar, and motor vans, laden with newspapers, will set out for the great railway *termini*. It is to feed these machines at the appropriate hour—ten minutes' delay would create havoc throughout the office—that everyone is hurrying. In every room, it seems, there is some harrowed journalist writing “against the clock.” Journalists, like other men, are the creatures of moods. There are days when their prevailing mood is good, others when it is bad. And writing is always a tempera-

mental occupation. The journalist must write whether he feels in the mood for it or not. Even though he tears up page after page in despair, even though he feels that his head has turned to wood or to wool and words fail him, he must, somehow or other, complete his column. It may mean censure if his column is poor; but it could mean little short of journalistic annihilation if he failed to produce his column at all.

The story is told of the leader-writer who delayed writing his leading article so long that at last the chief compositor came in and explained that even if the leader-writer began his article immediately, it would be too late for insertion, "Fetch me *The Times*," cried the inventive journalist. *The Times* was brought. The poor man cut out its leading article and pasted it on a sheet of paper. At the top of this sheet he wrote: *The Times* says..." and at the bottom he wrote: "What does *The Times* mean by this?" Journalists of a later generation have been able to repeat the story, but not, unfortunately, the method. It is, however, unfair to tell this story against a contemporary of *The Times* without telling a well authenticated story against *The Times* itself. A famous leader-writer, who subsequently became a Dean, once drank two glasses of champagne and sat down to write a leading article on Ireland. An hour later, the editor's secretary came into the room and found the leader-writer fast asleep, with a piece of paper in front of him, on which was written the single word "Moreover..."

I hope that I have suggested that it is something of a triumph for a newspaper to appear at all, with all its

essential paraphernalia—its leading articles, its personal and birth, death and marriage columns, its daily joke and great thought. But this triumph does not impress you. You judge a newspaper not by its quantity, but by its quality. You ask: "What is the mission of a newspaper?" The very fact that I have been assigned the subject, "The Newspaper and the City," indicates that you expect a newspaper to have some mission other than that of providing news, jokes and chatty comments. You ask, since we are all concerned with the great city of Bombay, "What is to be the relation of our newspapers to the social and civic life of Bombay? Are they to be numbered among its centres of cultural unity? Are they to gather up some of the innumerable and diversified elements of the city and so provide strength where hitherto all was weakness? Are they to produce sympathy and understanding where hitherto there was ignorance and apathy? In short, can a newspaper give to Bombay a civic consciousness that is creative and vital?"

These questions may seem easy to answer. In reality, they are difficult. We have not merely to decide, "What is a newspaper?" We have also to decide, "What is Bombay?" The newspaper with which I am associated calls itself *The Times of India*, not *The Times of Bombay*. Similarly, the newspaper with which I was associated in England was called *The Yorkshire Post*, not *The Leeds Post*, though it was printed and found its strongest support in the grim, but lively and very self-conscious, city of Leeds. These titles are good. They imply that the two newspapers envisage an area

far larger than the city, though the city may have a population that numbers several hundred thousands or even more than a million.

Bombay belongs to India. Without the great hinterland with its endless village communities and its millions of agricultural workers Bombay, as we know her to-day, would not exist. Now clearly a newspaper which takes the proud title of *The Times of India*—or any other newspaper that claims to represent the authoritative opinion of India—is bound to see Bombay in relation to the rest of India. It should give to the problems of Bombay no more than their due proportion. Bombay is not first and foremost an exclusive city, which lives by itself, isolated on a semi-continent. It is first and foremost, the “Gateway of India,” and the journalist associated with a national newspaper, a journalist who has come to study the problems of the country rather than the city, must be forgiven, I think, if he devotes his attention to India, rather than to the Gateway. And it is well, even for the citizens of Bombay that he should do so. When agriculture, India’s prime industry, is depressed, Bombay suffers. When the monsoon has been good, when there is content in the land, Bombay reaps not a little of the advantage. A man, they say, cannot be a good Englishman until he has learned to be a good European. We may apply this observation to Bombay: A man cannot be a good citizen of Bombay until he has learned to be a good Indian. I think that the journalist—and I do not necessarily confine the word to the writer of leading articles,—cannot be of any real value to his fellow-citizens in Bombay, until



he has studied the problems with which his newspaper will deal in the following order: India, Bombay Presidency, the City of Bombay.

But though I have said this, do not suppose that I regard the problems of Bombay as of no account. For the problems of Bombay are extraordinarily important. They are, in fact, so important that we cannot afford to adopt any attitude which betrays a lack of proper perspective, a true sense of proportion. We cannot, for instance, even begin to understand the labour problems of Bombay until we realise that many of the workers form a floating population: they belong to the agricultural classes and it is to the agricultural communities, that sooner or later, they return. So we find that our knowledge of labour conditions will depend ultimately upon our knowledge of the habits and fortunes of the rural classes. Have we not come nearer to a right answer to the question, "What is Bombay?" It is an industrial island, set in an agricultural semi-continent, for which it forms an important port; a temporary refuge for agricultural workers; a centre of government and a seat of learning. But, of course, this is not a complete answer. For, undoubtedly, Bombay is one of the greatest, as it is certainly one of the most fascinating, cities in the world. Immediately the journalist arrives in Bombay and sees those strange contrasts of wealth and poverty, of colour and squalor, dignity and ugliness, he asks: "What ought a newspaper to do?" I asked that question two years ago. I am still asking it; and I feel that it is the citizens of Bombay, and not I, who should be trying to give the answer.

Whatever our rank or position in life, it is only from our own personal experience that we can provide some answer to the questions which others put to us. Until the age of twenty-three I had lived all my life in the country, a county or university town. I had no idea what problems were presented by the existence of a great city. At the age of twenty I passed through Leeds and Bradford and spent two nights in what must be a suburb of one of the two cities. I was more repelled than impressed; and I am sure that I vowed never to visit West Riding again. But men can only propose; and when my Oxford days were over, and I was compelled to start working in life wherever I could, it was in Leeds that I found my first job. I know that my first week in Leeds was almost as intolerable as my first week in Bombay; but I found leaving it no less intolerable. For Leeds, admittedly the ugliest city in England, had at least one redeeming feature: it is friendly, frank and helpful; and it has a great civic patriotism. I remember, in 1926, when the city held its tercentenary celebrations, flags and bunting were displayed in the streets, relics of the jubilee and the diamond jubilee were re-discovered and displayed. It was not artistic, and I think the casual visitor would have thought it all rather foolish. But in that tercentenary year the citizens made a great resolve. They were determined that Leeds should one day be "a smokeless city"; and they are not sleeping upon their word. I remember too, the happy and bohemian luncheon clubs, which roped in Archbishops, Peers and Lord Mayors to speak on the future and the present

problems of the city. This civic pride may have had its humorous side; for the neighbouring city of Bradford likewise felt itself to be the centre of West Riding, and sometimes feeling between the two cities was so strained that it almost required courage to be seen talking to a man from Bradford. Yet, surely, even a mistaken civic pride is better than no civic pride at all.

And then, after four years of journalistic work in the West Riding of Yorkshire, I came to Bombay. If I thought that the citizens of Leeds often overdid their civic patriotism, I thought, and still think, that there is not enough of civic patriotism in Bombay. For this many reasons can be given. Work in Leeds and, even against your will, you become a citizen of Leeds. Live in London, and before long the rest of England, the England that has made the Londoner what he is, is relegated to the Provinces. But this is not so true of Bombay. The mill workers are thinking constantly of their native village, and when times in Bombay are bad, they return to it. Most of the population in Leeds or London has forgotten the village from which its grandparents may have come; anyway, they never intend to leave the town-life. In other classes in Bombay there is the same urge to return to the country. People wish to die in the village in which their parents die. Then take the European population. It is small, but very important. What happens? The members of the services never know when they will be called to leave Bombay. Many young men are assistants in firms which have other branches in India, and consequently they move from branch to branch.

Once every three years the individual European makes the homeward trek—and home is always in the West. A European who claims to spend twenty years in India actually spends one-seventh of that period in Europe “on leave”. The English-trained journalist—perhaps even the Indian-trained journalist—looks upon Fleet Street as the nerve-centre of his profession, and Fleet Street looks only too rarely upon India and her problems, hardly ever upon Bombay.

Is that why the name of Bombay is associated with no school of thought or new development of art? There is a Bengal school of painting and a Bengal school of poetry. Calcutta has stood for something other than industry and commerce. Industry and commerce are not to be despised. There is a great danger, in England as well as in India, of politicians speaking and acting on behalf of their country when they have not understood all the ramifications and implications of the new industrial order. Yet in a great city there are many who stand outside the industrial system, or whose capacities are not completely exercised by it—thinkers, scholars, social workers, architects, poets, painters, writers, clergymen, actors, political reformers, schoolmasters, university dons and students. They must find their true place in the civic society before Bombay can be said to have reached a healthy state of civic consciousness. Naturally, they look to the newspaper—whatever its political views may be—to act as the medium for their views and aspirations. “Full report and fair comment”: every newspaper should make this its aim. Yet, just as the electorate

gets the government it deserves, so the reading public gets the newspapers it deserves.

The demand for a better press is perfectly legitimate, but a better press is dependent upon the public itself. The press can, and ought to, foster civic consciousness. Yet there are places where civic consciousness is so strong that the local press cannot fail to mirror it. Bombay is not one of those places. It is one thing to ask: "What is wrong with Bombay?" it is a better thing to ask: "Since something is obviously wrong with Bombay, what are we going to do about it?" If the press can bring people to ask this second question, it has itself supplied half the answer. The mere fact that very much more than half the population is migratory may render civic consciousness difficult; but it does not make it impossible. A man remembers his old school with affection, though he was there no longer than five years. The period at the University is pathetically short; yet Oxford and Cambridge men in all parts of the world give a life-devotion to their University. Why not give the same devotion to Bombay? Within the boundaries of the city are innumerable charms and talents: let us help to quicken them into abundant and re-creative life.

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## CHAPTER III

# “COMMUNAL GROUPS AND THE CITY”

BY

MR. M. R. JAYAKAR, M. L. A., BAR-AT-LAW

The subject which has been assigned to me in this series is of necessity a somewhat controversial one, but I shall attempt to deal with it in as intelligent a manner as possible, basing my observations upon my experience as a citizen of this city, as a public leader, and as one long interested in the problems of India as a whole. The purpose of this series of papers, as I understand it, is to consider in what ways we can make our city more united, more harmonious, and a better city in which to live. Certainly the communal problem is one which must be carefully studied if we are to realise this purpose.

Bombay, like Alexandria of old, is a cosmopolitan city. Many years ago, when I established a school in Bombay, I brought to it as teachers several men from Fergusson College in Poona. Although these men were college men and had a certain cultural background, it was not until they came to Bombay that they fully realised that India did not simply mean Brahmin and non-Brahmin, which was the all-important problem of the Deccan. They came to see that the problem was a wider one, including Hindus, Mahom-

edans, Christians, Parsis and Jews. A mofussil man, standing at Queens Road, even in the days before automobiles, found himself in a new world resembling Europe more than the India to which he was accustomed. And what was true then is much more true to-day.

The communal groups in the city of Bombay are at present more self-conscious than ever. The general political awakening throughout the whole of India has found its counterpart and has even been intensified in the city of Bombay. The Hindu, having for a long time held practically a monopoly on politics, has long since been politically self-conscious, but the other groups have now become so. It is a happy sign of the times when men take an interest in the political affairs of their country, and I welcome it.

In addition to the major communal divisions which are quite apparent, there are cross divisions within communal groups. The Hindu, Mahomedan, Parsi, Christian and Jewish communities have their own many sub-sections. Take for example, the Multani and the Deccani. Although both the Multani and the Deccani come from the same Hindu community, there are several features of the former which more nearly approximate those of the Mahomedan than those of his Deccani brother. The Multani is really more allied to Muslim culture than to the Hindu. Or take the Sindhi Hindus and Sindhi Mahomedans living in Bombay. The two groups can scarcely be distinguished, save perhaps for differences in their manner of eating. It is quite clear that communal

divisions are man-made divisions, for in the legal profession, commerce and among the professional groups in general, they are practically non-existent.

The new self-consciousness of the various communal groups is manifesting itself in many ways. The fact that more and more of our citizens are being given the vote leads more and more of them to take an interest in public affairs. We are in a transitional stage, and during such a stage conflicts and misunderstandings are bound to arise. They are a part of the growing pains of the nation.

There were times when better conditions prevailed. As a lawyer, I have had the privilege of examining many ancient documents and many old-time wills. I have been much impressed by the feeling of friendliness between various communities which used to exist in this Island of Bombay. Wills of benevolent Parsis are testified to by Hindu friends. Mahomedans and Hindus address each other in terms of real affection. I recall one instance in which a Hindu gentleman especially thanks a Mahomedan friend for his services in helping him to select his wife. A really uncommon friendliness between the different communities must have prevailed at that time. To-day this friendliness has to some extent been replaced by self-consciousness. Without deploring the fact, we must admit that there is this communal feeling. But out of this chaos and discord, harmony must arise.

The communal problem is not peculiar to India. The Englishman is fond of using the expression "*in this country*,"—as if "this country" contained evils



the like of which could nowhere else be duplicated. But even in America, the most recent of all countries, there is the same communal problem, to say nothing of the old days when English Catholics and Protestants engaged in open conflict with one another.

The difference between America and India, is that in America they are making serious attempts to cope with the problem in a scientific fashion. We should do likewise. In America there are associations devoting their whole time to the study of the communal problem, its causes, developments and methods of prevention. The study has reached such a point that they are able to present statistics, showing at what age in the boy or girl the communal feeling is the strongest. These students have come to definite conclusions and are applying remedies based upon these conclusions.

What a happy thing it would be if representatives from all of the varying communities in Bombay should form a society to study this problem—to analyse causes, and to suggest what remedies can best be applied at particular times. In America they begin to deal with the problem in the schools. They have discovered that the early impressions of the child are most important, and that the child mind must be protected. They knew that when a child has absorbed impressions, even though these impressions may pass into the sub-conscious region, they stay there for years and years, even as microbes of a virulent disease. And then, when the proper stimulus presents itself, perhaps a long time later, these repressions reassert themselves in virulent form. The degree of virulence is only condi-

tioned by the intensity of the stimulus at the time of impression. It follows then that stimuli to communal hatred should be made as rare and few as possible.

Let me give an instance from America. In a certain city the Poles and Yankees came into conflict. The Poles wanted to worship in their own way, but the Yankee majority said, "No." The inevitable result was conflict. The Yankees then began to take counsel. They decided that the Poles must develop their own self-consciousness and so they contributed money to erect a building for the Poles, wherein the Poles might worship in accordance with their own desires. Twenty-five years passed—a long time at a certain period of a woman's life, but a very short time in the history of a nation—and the Poles of their own accord approached the Yankees with the proposition that they should worship together, in a building to be erected by their joint contributions. This is what is happening in other countries, and this is our problem to-day.

Another illustration from America. In a certain school there was conflict between the town children and the country children. You can see the communal problem does not always take the same form. The type of conflict varies in different nations and different sections. But in this instance there was the rural-city problem. There was much hard feeling between the students, and the life of the school was almost wholly disrupted. The principal was a wise man. He saw that the settling of this life problem was even of more importance than the lessons laid down in the school curriculum. He also saw that the problem had its roots

in the home, and so he began to bring together children and parents in social functions. There were functions for children and functions for parents. The people began to get better acquainted with one another. They met each other face to face, and the problem disappeared. What are we doing in India along this line? Student functions we have, but our schools do not get hold of the parents. Here is food for thought for the members of the Municipal Schools Committee.

Another instance comes to my mind. A little girl who had been studying the life of Jesus came to her mother and said, "Mother, the Jews killed Christ." The mother was a woman of intelligence, and like a flash she answered back, "Yes, my daughter, and if Jesus were alive to-day, we Protestants would kill him." The mother saw the real issue involved, and removed at once that which threatened to be a source of communal discord.

The American groups lead the child to realise that his impulses, attitudes and emotions are similar to those of other people, and a common bond is set up between them.

Another American experiment is the organisation of Ward Clubs for the improvement of particular areas of the city. Citizens of all classes meet together to discuss common sanitary problems, to lay plans for making the city beautiful, and for improving the general level of life. The secret of the success of these organisations is that they deal with common problems, and through dealing with common problems, other

problems are made common. Common interests are created where they do not exist. Planting trees, providing open spaces and the like are not very controversial problems but the friendships gained through these activities are a powerful solvent of matters of controversy. If we could carry out activities of this kind in India, it would be a very splendid thing indeed.

What Americans and Europeans have done in Ward Societies, we too can do. In India the communal problem has been to a large extent political, resulting in a series of compromises or victories. But victory is always one-sided and leaves a sting, while a compromise leaves but a lesser sting. Compromises and victories have failed to bring communal peace, and they will fail to bring it. Harmony will not come until a man realises that his own interests are the interests of his brother. We must move from the realm of politics to doing the things that lie near at hand—to working together in our schools and in our wards.

In America the minority group is given a helping hand and guided until it can guide itself. Just as the elder student cares for the younger student, and the elder professional man *should* guide the younger professional man, so the cultured must help the uncultured, and the weak help the strong. It is this method which gets results—the results which will bring peace and happiness to this city which we love.

## CHAPTER IV

# "SOCIAL WORK AND THE CITY"

By  
MR. K. NATARAJAN  
EDITOR OF  
(*The Indian Social Reformer*)

The Nagpada Neighbourhood House, under whose auspices this series of studies was undertaken, is founded as a centre of influence based upon the injunction, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." In popular usage a man's neighbour is the man living next door to him; but the sense in which Jesus Christ used the word is different. Mr. Kirby Page, in his latest book, "Jesus or Christianity," says that Jesus meant by "neighbour" everyone who stood in need of assistance. That is a good definition, but an even better interpretation is that of the Vedanta as Paul Deussen explained it in the following passage from a lecture delivered in Bombay nearly thirty years ago:

The Gospels fix quite correctly as the highest law of Morality: "Love your neighbour as yourselves." But why should I do so, since by the order of nature I feel pain and pleasure only in myself, not in my neighbour? The answer is not in the Bible (this venerable book being not yet quite free of Semitic realism), but it is in the Veda, is in the great formula *Tat Tvam Asi*, which gives us in three words metaphysics and morals together. You shall love your neighbour as yourselves, because you are your neighbour, and mere illusion makes you believe that your neighbour is something different from yourselves. Or in the words of the *Bhagavadgitā*: he who knows himself in everything and everything in himself will not injure himself by himself,

*Na Hinasti Atmana Atmanam.* This is the sum and tenor of all morality.

This to me seems to be a good statement of the case. It is my opinion that enlightened self interest is the best policy for any individual to follow. If I order my life for my own best interests, it is quite certain that my best interests will also prove to be the best interests of my neighbour. Humanity is so intertwined that every man is a part of every other man. We stand or fall together. A riot in which you have no concern, or a war which you detest, affects you just as much as though you were an active participant in it. The actions of people thousands of miles away have their reaction upon your life, so that we may say, with truth, that the whole world is a neighbourhood, and all men are our neighbours. So far as to the *why* of social service.

Our next query is, "*What* is Social service?" Social service is helping one's self through helping one's neighbour. Practically everyone is engaged in social service. All of us are in some way affecting social life for the better or for the worse. Everything we do has its effect and returns to us in some manner or other. The careless throwing of a burning cigarette end has often led to disastrous fires. In the same way a wise word spoken thousands of years ago has been a solace and inspiration to many. There is no such thing as a useless person, for every person is of some value. Even the beggar on the street is performing an act of social service, because his very presence on the street is a reminder to the more comfortable people that

they have a duty towards the poor. Wordsworth devoted a poem to explain the importance of the beggar to society. The following lines occur in his "Old Cumberland Beggar":

But deem not this man useless . . . . .  
. . . . . While from door to door,  
This old man creeps, the villagers in him  
Behold a record which together binds  
Past deeds and offices of charity,  
Else unremembered, and so keeps alive  
The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,  
And that half-wisdom half-experience gives  
Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign  
To selfishness and cold, oblivious cares.  
Among the farms and solitary huts,  
Hamlets and thinly scattered villages,  
Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,  
The mild necessity of use compels  
To acts of love; and habit does the work  
Of reason; yet prepares that after-joy  
Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,  
By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued,  
Doth find herself insensibly disposed  
To virtue and true goodness.

The other day I was talking to a friend who was lamenting the fact that there seems to be so much selfishness in the world—people doing things for their own selfish good. But it is my opinion, as I have suggested above, that even selfish acts conduce to the welfare of society as a whole. If all men were suddenly to become unselfish, I very much doubt if the total result would be very much different than it is at present. As a matter of fact it is extremely difficult to know how to help another person in the wisest manner.

But doing things for one's self is not social service. Social service must be conscious. The obligation is upon all of us to do something for society. It is only thus that we really fulfil ourselves. The new psychology talks much about the necessity of self-expression. Social service is one of the finest means of self-expression, as well as a means of sublimating less worthy desires.

As I think upon the topic, "Social Work and the City of Bombay," what does the word "Bombay" convey to me? As a matter of fact it conveys a rather narrow meaning. I think of my office down in Medows Street. I think of my home, my friends, and the interests with which I am most closely associated. The section of the city in which the Neighbourhood House is located scarcely ever enters into the picture. Bombay to most of us means that part of the city with which we are most familiar. But it really should mean something more.

Among the necessities and amenities of life which should be sufficiently available to all citizens of a city are air, water, food, clothing, elementary education for children, decent and sanitary housing and opportunities for self-culture. The adequate provision of these will of itself solve many a social problem. It is the deprivation of these that largely leads to anti-social conduct. The city of Bombay, the improvement of which is the purpose of these studies, is one of the worst socially organised communities in the world. A population of one million three hundred thousand is cooped up in half of an island whose area is about



twenty-three square miles. Two-thirds of this population is male and only one-third is female. The housing conditions are most deplorable, nearly two-thirds of the population inhabiting one-room tenements where 43 per cent. of the total deaths of the city occur and 82 per cent. of the deaths of infants in this city. To the majority of the people of Bombay a healthy family life is impossible. The preponderance of men in the population and the housing problem are two fundamental social problems.

What can we do about it? The individual social worker or the private social agency can only indirectly help. The bulk of the work must be done by the State, Municipal and other authorities, and the social worker must see that these authorities are kept up to the mark. We must elect earnest and sincere men to the Municipality and keep them prodded that they may do their duty to the people of the city.

When an individual begins to think about the social problems of Bombay he cannot but despair. Fifteen years ago the mills were warned that it was to their best interests to move up-country instead of centering in Bombay. But the warning was not heeded, and today the mills with their problems are on our hands, while the up-country mills are flourishing. Far too many of our social problems arise through our own mistakes, though we are slow to recognise it. It is impossible to have industrial peace in Bombay until our citizens are able to lead a healthy family life. We need more able thinkers who will think in terms of humanity instead of in terms of statistics.

Professor Patrick Geddes used to say of the Development Department Chawls that it was not housing but ware-housing the people, and the Professor got into hot water with the authorities for his outspokenness. Professor Geddes laid it down as an axiom that no chawl in Bombay should be permitted of a height which a pregnant woman with a pot of water cannot comfortably ascend. It is this kind of thinking, in which social work is kept constantly in touch with human need, that has to be fostered particularly in our municipal councillors, legislators, and members of Government. Patrick Geddes said that he prophesied several years before the Great war that the manner in which the workers were housed in Berlin was bound to produce a nervous condition in them leading to a revolution. In Bombay, however, whenever we encounter trouble we are ready to ascribe it to Bolshevism, Communism, or any other cause, instead of to the real condition of the people which makes them a ready prey to subversive propaganda. We prevent an epidemic of cholera by purifying our water supply and not by prosecuting the carriers of the bacilli and sending them to jail.

Consider the problem of prostitution. The problem of prostitution in Bombay has been, and is being, carefully studied. We are aware of how girls are recruited. We know the careful watch that is kept for new recruits at the large girls schools and female orphanages. We know of the activities of pimps and unscrupulous gharry-wallas. We realise that many difficulties are connected with the rescue of girls and

restoring them to a normal life. Many of our citizens are actively campaigning against prostitution, but the movement will make little headway until something is done about the more fundamental problem of making Bombay a city in which a wholesome family life is possible.

Sanitation and education are two other large social problems about which little can be done by private initiative. Our municipal bodies, instead of quarreling over petty things of no account, should address themselves to the really big problems of the city and get down to fundamentals. I think the University might profitably establish a class for training in municipal leadership. The Corporation should maintain a large library of books on social subjects and the corporators should be compelled to make use of this library. When our legislators become intelligent upon social problems we can look for social progress.

But what can private interests do? The big projects requiring the expenditure of much money must be handled by Government and the Municipality. There is, however, a field for private social workers. The private social agency can function best in those fields where sympathy and the personal touch are most essential. The Municipality and the Government are removed from the people. They may act in the interests of the people, but they cannot be said to have a heart or soul. The personal touch can only be given by individuals. And even private social organisations must beware lest in building up an organisation or institution their work may become mechanised and

heartless. It is impossible for either public or private agencies to relieve all the material wants of the people. But the social worker can speak the word of cheer, the word of comfort and counsel, and relieve the troubled mind.

You are all familiar with the old story of Guatama Buddha, how a woman went to him bearing her dead child in her arms. The child had been stung by a serpent and the woman was sore distressed. With the tears streaming down her cheeks she pleaded with the Buddha to restore her little one to life. "I will," replied the Great Teacher, "under one condition. Go out into the village from door to door, and bring me five grains of mustard seed from a house in which no one has died." The woman went out, but could find no house in the village which had not been touched by the hand of Death. Accordingly at length she returned saying, "Lord, I have carried out your instructions. I have gone from house to house seeking the grains of mustard seed, and though the people have all been kind to me, I could find no house in which death had not entered." The Buddha then made answer, "Go bury the child, and give your life to helping the sons of others." It is said that the woman accepted the advice, became a disciple, and was known far and near as a helper of humanity.

This story is a fine example of pedagogical method. The woman learned by doing. She found out for herself that death was universal, and found consolation in her service to humanity. The social worker should pursue this method. The actual misfortunes of people

are of less importance than the spirit in which they are met. And the social worker can help to impart the courageous spirit.

The social worker must be healthy in body and mind, and a person of ready sympathies. He must be a student of psychology—particularly the new psychology which deals with the motives of men. He must have an infinite capacity for patience: the power of hope in the face of constant and repeated failures. He must be content to work and wait, trusting where he cannot see. He must have the religious spirit, the spirit which enables him to carry on in spite of discouragement. And finally, he must know that progress only comes by slow degrees, by patient and unwearied effort, and that sudden progress by revolution is the great illusion against which he must ever guard.

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## CHAPTER V

### “EDUCATION AND THE CITY”

By

PRINCIPAL JOHN MCKENZIE OF WILSON COLLEGE

There are a great many obvious things that one might say about Education and the City. One might go over again the statistics of illiteracy and expose the inadequacy of the efforts that Government, the Municipality, and other bodies are making to meet it. One might then go on to show for the benefit of these various bodies the need for the establishment of schools in all parts of the city and for the universal application of the principle of compulsion. All this has frequently been said already, and I have nothing to add on the subject. If I were to go over the ground again I should probably find it necessary to demur to, or qualify, some of the things that have been said.

Or, taking another line, one might enter into a criticism of the educational system and make proposals for the amending of it. This could be done, and has been done, from various points of view—from the point of view of the relation of education to the practical business of life, or from that of its relation to national traditions and ideals for example. One might say a great many true and useful things along these lines, for there is not the slightest doubt that our educational system requires amendment in many ways. But I have the feeling that a great deal of our

discussion of educational system has concerned itself too much with detail and too little with larger and more important questions, without attention to which our discussion of detail must lose much of its value.

I shall perhaps be excused, therefore, if, greatly daring, I try in these few pages to take you back to certain elementary things which, I believe, ought to be kept in view in a study of the relation of education to the well-being of the city.

With all the talk that we hear about education, I believe there is a great deal of ignorance and confusion as to what education itself is—what is its nature and what is its function. Try the experiment of asking any of your friends who is prepared to dogmatise in educational questions what he means by education, and his answer will show you what his opinion is worth. Ask a group of ordinarily intelligent people to write down their definition of education, and I am prepared to prophesy that you will get some surprising results. The wiser among them will probably be chary of writing down any brief definition at all. I shall follow their example, and shall try instead to direct your attention to some points that may help to make more clear the place of education in a city like this.

When we speak of education in the strict sense I think we always mean definite, conscious effort to do something with young people—to impart certain instruction, or to develop in them certain habits, or to draw out and give direction to certain capacities that are latent in them. Yet anyone who thinks about education at all is aware that in the education of

everyone there are operative influences that cannot be brought completely under control so as to be given a definite place in a school or college curriculum. One thinks, for example, of the account that Wordsworth gives in the *Prelude* of his education—of the place that nature had in it, speaking to him from his early days “rememberable things.” And, allowing for some poetic exaggeration, there is truth, is there not, in the lines:

One impulse from a vernal wood  
Will teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can.

Happy those who have had nature for a teacher. It is true that one may live within the precincts of her school, and yet never be her pupil. Whatever advantages the city child may have over the child brought up in the country, it is doubtful if they are compensation for the loss of this great and wise teacher.

Then there is the whole environment in which one grows up—the varied works of men’s hands, and the men and women themselves, with all the activities in which they engage and the relationships into which they enter with each other. In Bombay today there must be thousands of children whose education is almost wholly of this accidental character. They are born into homes in which parental control and guidance is almost completely lacking. Their primary education is that of the streets. They get from it a certain superficial sharpness, but little knowledge that is to be of service in the business of life, and less than no



discipline. I think of other influences that are contributing to the shaping of the life of the young in our cities. Let me mention only one—the cinema. It is to-day among the most potent of our educators. In some countries it is now being largely used in the schools, and used I believe with good effect. It has not yet been given a large place in the schools of Bombay, but it is exercising an influence of incalculable greatness outside of them. It is an influence that is very mixed—good in parts and bad in parts, but somehow the bad seems to be more obtrusive and more popular than the good. People are aware of its educative influence—of the way in which it is contributing to the moulding of the lives of the young, to the forming of their thoughts and their affections. And there are many who deplore the influence that the lower class of cinema exerts. But whatever we may say about it, it is there, as it is, because people are content to have it so. They are content that their children should get their ideas of life so largely from such a source. You may protest that you are not content that this should be so; probably none of us are so content. But the trouble is that people with worthy ideals have not as a whole sufficiently realised how much they contribute to the maintenance of evil by their passive tolerance of it.

There are a great many more things that one might say on the importance of the environment from the point of view of education. I have said this much because the educationist in the street is apt to imagine that education is something that is carried on only in

the school, and possibly to some small extent in the home. A good school may do much in spite of a bad environment, and a good home may do even more. But there is always the environment to be reckoned with as a source of tremendously powerful influence. I feel that it is impossible to speak about education and the city of Bombay without drawing your attention to the fact that there are elements enough in the environment, the influence of which is what (for want of a better name) I may call diseducative. There are multitudes of children, who, whether they go to school or not, are having their intellects and characters formed or deformed under the influence of vicious surroundings, slum dwellings, filth and disease. No educationist can ignore these things, or leave them out of his programme of reform.

So far I have been speaking about the background of education. I pass on to say certain things about education in the narrower sense, particularly that which is carried on in the school or the college, where the purpose is definitely to produce certain results in the mind, or, more broadly, in the life of the pupil. It is school and college which must concern us most, but they will not do so exclusively, for it is only in comparatively modern times that they have come to dominate the situation. We have nowadays all manner of schools and colleges—schools that are simply “schools”, graded according to the level of advancement as primary, middle or high; and we have colleges that are simply “colleges.” But then we have schools or colleges of science and medicine and law and so on,

some of them now quite ancient institutions. And in these last days we have seen the emergence of institutions like schools for commercial training, schools of journalism, schools of housewifery, schools of dancing and physical culture. This means more than just mere "high falutin." Sometimes it means no more than this, it is true, for there are all kinds of sham "schools" and "colleges." But more and more in the preparation which is given to the young for all sorts of activities the tendency has been to seek not merely the mastery of certain kinds of skill but the understanding of principles. And this has meant the use of the printed page, and this in turn has led to the popular belief that education means only or chiefly the reading of books.

This is a matter that is worthy of some consideration. There was a time when a man might fill a high and honourable and useful place in society without being able to read and write, indeed when these were almost considered to be accomplishments unworthy of a gentleman. Some of my readers may remember the words of the Douglas on Marmion:

A letter forged! Saint Jude to speed!  
Did ever knight so foul a deed!  
At first in heart it liked me ill,  
When the king praised his clerkly skill.  
Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine.  
Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line.

Charlemagne was one of the greatest and most influential figures in the history of Europe, and he was illiterate. The great Akbar could neither read nor write. These men may have been illiterate, but it

would be a very narrow conception of education by which they would be classed as uneducated men. They were men who had been fitted, and well fitted, to perform functions of the highest importance in the world as it was in the times in which they lived. They had somehow or other received an education that contributed to making them fit for this.

When we speak of education in ancient India, we usually think of the guru with his little band of pupils whom he initiated into the mysteries of the deep things of the spirit, or into one or other of the various branches of learning which flourished so profusely in those ancient days. But that was a learning that was not for the masses of the people. There were the peasants and the artisans above all, the workers of India, who were largely outside the intellectual movement connected with the schools, but who nevertheless received their own important kind of education. It was given not through books, nor did it consist of profound doctrine passed on by word of mouth from teacher to pupil. It was given in the home, in the workshop, in the fields, and it consisted in skill and discipline passed on chiefly from father to son. It was education, for here we had a system according to which the members of every part of the social organism were fitted to play their proper part in the service of the whole. The philosopher and the grammarian received their proper education, the carpenter and goldsmith received their's.

Nowadays the cry is for mass education, and when you ask those who join in the cry what they mean by

mass education, they generally tell you in the first place that they mean the removal of illiteracy. The common idea is that the person who has learned to read and write has received the first beginnings of education, while the illiterate person has not. Now, I must say at this point, otherwise I shall be misunderstood and misrepresented, that I believe with all my heart that every child should be taught to read and write, and I believe further that there is something far wrong with any modern society that does not set itself resolutely to work for the provision of an elementary education for all its children, that shall include reading and writing. But, as I have shown that there have been people who have not acquired the arts of reading and writing, who nevertheless are entitled to be described as educated, so I would assert that reading and writing do not necessarily at the present day mean education.

Let me explain this a little. There are in India great numbers of people—the actual numbers have been variously estimated—who once were in school and there learned to read and write, but who have relapsed into illiteracy. In what sense were these people educated? Did they gain anything by the acquisition of something that was capable of being sloughed off as the snake sloughs its skin? Or was not rather the time spent in acquiring an art that was to prove so useless that it perished from lack of exercise, was not the time wasted and worse than wasted? Or again, another set of questions is suggested by a class that is very familiar to all of us—the class of people who have not lost the arts of reading and writing, but who

never seem to have used them for the good either of themselves or of others. You remember the often quoted words of Caliban:

You taught me language, and my profit on't  
Is, I know how to curse.

There are far too many Calibans about—people who have learned to read, but have never learned what to read; whose reading is restricted to racing news and to the most worthless and demoralising rubbish that appears in the low class press. Is a man in any sense educated simply because he has acquired an art, if the art be perversely exercised? Has education even begun when all that has been acquired is certain knowledge and certain skill? Would it not be better to go back to the old ways, and leave the alphabet and all its possible permutations and combinations to those who may be counted upon to use it aright?

This is a fairly long preamble to one of the most important things that I have to say. I have perhaps said nothing that is new to those who have given even a small amount of thought to educational questions; and the important point to which I have been leading up is by no means novel; but there are so many quite intelligent people who have not grasped it that I have considered it worth while elaborating it. The truth is that no acquisition is of the nature of education unless it is fitted to some function that subserves the true well-being of man. We have failed to educate, no matter how much knowledge we may have imparted or how much skill we have produced, unless the skill or knowledge have been related to life as a whole.

Education means the training of the young for life, and for the whole of life.

It may be that some who have followed me up to this point are inclined now to say to me, "Now the secret is out. We understand your view of education. Every man is to be educated for his proper function: the ruler for ruling, the doctor for healing, the barber for hairdressing, and the sweeper for sweeping. And we take it you mean that every man is to stick to his own business and not interfere with the others." This is partly true, but, stated in this form, entirely misleading. It suggests that education is not for the whole of life, but for one particular range of activities, those by which one earns one's bread. No man is simply a ruler, or a doctor, or a barber, or a sweeper. He is also a man—a member of a family; a member of some local community, village or city; in these modern days, in some sense a citizen of the world; and always a dweller in time and space, whose thoughts and aspirations lift him above the limitations that these would seem to put upon him. So the education of any human being is not so simple a business as it might at first sight seem to be, even with the limitations we have put upon it. There are two sources of complication regarding which I wish to say something.

Firstly, our modern world presents even to the humblest a far greater variety of interests than did the ancient world, or even the world of a hundred years ago. In India the most remote villages have been brought into touch with the populous centres, and the

old isolation has gone for ever. But it is not simply the isolation of the villages that has been broken down. Every part of the world has become dependent on the rest to a degree that at one time would have seemed to be impossible. There is no new invention or discovery, no new idea, no new activity, that does not have its significance for lands far remote from that in which it has arisen. This is a commonplace which I do not need to develop. I would only draw your attention to its meaning for education. It has meant that the environment to which education must help one to adapt himself has become infinitely wider and more complicated even for the humblest. I have pointed out already that ability to read and write does not make a man an educated man. I must supplement this statement now by saying that a man or a woman who in this city of Bombay today is unable to read and write is not only devoid of education, but is without the instruments that make any education possible. The man or woman who has learned to read and write but who seeks adjustment to the wider environment through the medium of the gutter press is in little better a state. These are negative statements, but I shall leave the matter at that till I have spoken of the second source of complication.

The second source of complication is closely related to the first, but it is not identical with it. The environment has not only become wider and more intricate. Within the past generation or two we have been passing, to use the words of Professor Gilbert Murray, from a cosmos into chaos. These are strong words, but



let me quote a few sentences from Professor Murray's book, "The Ordeal of this Generation," to explain their meaning :

The Greek City State was a cosmos; it produced a world in which the good citizen knew exactly how to behave; it was overthrown by a chaos of military conquests, in which no one felt clear what to think or what to do. The Roman Empire was a cosmos, its break-up, a chaos. The mediaeval conception of the unity of Christendom under the Pope and the Emperor was, in conception, a cosmos, though one that failed before it was realised.

He goes on to suggest that the Victorian Era was in the main a cosmos, an ordered unity, and he tells his English readers that they have witnessed its breakdown.

We have here a true and a very suggestive thought. Let us think of the process that has been going on in India. Here is a land in which for many centuries life was for the Hindu citizen ordered and regulated. I am not forgetting the floods of invasion from the north. Through all these the Hindu social and religious structure stood. The individual's place in it was determined for him with the greatest definiteness. But in modern times there have been brought to bear upon India, as upon China and other eastern lands, forces in the face of which it could not continue to stand unchanged. And these forces have come from lands in which "chaos", in Professor Murray's sense of the word, prevails. There is nothing to be gained by either mourning or exulting over this. We are face to face with a situation which I think had inevitably to come. The great advances that have been made in

knowledge, particularly in science, invention and discovery, combined with the acceleration of travel and communication which resulted from them, have destroyed all our tidy plans of the universe. Great new territories of truth have been discovered, but there are great uncharted seas lying between and beyond them. And it is not simply a matter of new knowledge. It is a matter of a new environment to which men have somehow to be adjusted. What are men to do in relation to it? The answer that is given to this question depends on the particular part of the environment that has caught the attention or imagination of the person who gives the answer. There is chaos among men's ideals.

In these ways the problem of education has been made immensely more difficult. The individual has to be fitted for playing his part in a social order that is in sad disorder and that is undergoing continuous change. What are we going to teach him, and how are we to do it? In this city the answer most commonly given will be, "Teach him on lines that will be of use to him in the business of life. Cut out all studies that have no practical value. Study the methods that have been followed in the schools in those lands where education has been most successfully related to work, especially to industry and commerce, and adapt these methods to India. In the Universities cut what are spoken of as cultural studies down to the minimum, and concentrate on the studies which will contribute directly to the increase of the wealth of the nation." There is certainly a great deal to be said for this point

of view. In a land that is so poor as India it certainly must be one of the objects of education to fit the young for careers in which they shall be able to add to the material wealth of the community, and incidentally to gain for themselves a greater share of this wealth than most of their elders now have. It is one of the hopeful signs of the present time that so much thought is being given to school curricula and teaching methods, and that in some places such valuable experimentation is being carried on with a view to improving education in these directions.

This is all good in its place, but the trouble is that in these days there are many people who have little more to say about education. There are things that people were once sure of that in these days have been shaken. It would seem as if we could at least be sure that material wealth is good—that in it we have one of the things that cannot be shaken. I am not so sure about it. Indeed I think one of our great dangers at the present time is that we should find ourselves committed to a system of education based on a materialistic philosophy of life without our realising to what we are committing ourselves. I do not think that most people deliberately desire this. I think, in spite of the chaos that has overtaken thinking and practice in these days, that the great body of thinking people have ideals for their children which have a higher place in their aspirations for their children than utilitarian ends. I feel quite sure that there is an enormous body of people whose desire for the material prosperity of their children falls far behind their desire to

see developed in them truthfulness, honesty, faithfulness to duty, purity of mind and of body, helpfulness to others. And I feel sure also that there are many who desire that in some way the eyes of their children should be directed to the invisible world in the quest for illumination and strength. There are still many things that cannot be shaken, and there is something far wrong with our education if it does not build on these as foundations.

In all this I may seem to have wandered considerably from my subject of Education and the City. I have done it deliberately. I am afraid I have not much understanding of what some people nowadays speak of as education for citizenship. I have never since my student days been able to think of education except in terms of the great figure of Plato where he likens it to the turning of the eyes from the shadows of the cave to the light. That is what it should be at all its levels and in all its forms. There will be great varieties in the content of it and in the details of method. But the inspiration will be the same. And it will, even where it is immediately concerned with the development of certain habits or certain skill, be concerned even more deeply with the development of love for certain ideals, without which all habits and all skill must be simply mechanical, and must fail even of attainment of the limited ends which they are designed immediately to attain.

And lest any may object that what I have said is all in the air, I shall come down to one practical point, much more practical, I believe, than a great deal that

is being said and written to-day about the improvement of education. The key to the whole situation lies in the teacher. One is amazed sometimes when one considers how little some people seem to care what sort of men or women are entrusted with the shaping of the intellects and characters of their children, and how little respect they have for the teaching profession. There are not wanting in this city teachers of the highest character and capacity, who have devoted their lives to this work as to a sacred calling. But how commonly the teaching profession is looked upon as the refuge of the unsuccessful. India is reaping the fruits of an educational policy that makes this possible.

We are often told that the cure for this is to pay teachers better. There is something in this, but it is not the most important thing. What is more important is that the teacher should have some of the respect in the community that he had in ancient times. Even in these materialistic days riches are not the only ground for respect. At all times a great deal of the most valuable work in the service of society has been done by people who have been poorly remunerated, so far as material reward is concerned. And there are still men and women who are willing to give themselves to this service without thought of personal profit. The trouble is that far too many parents, if they give any thought at all to the selection of teachers, are guided only by records of success in examinations. There is no surer way to reduce the teacher to a mere hack.

I would say with all the earnestness that I can command that the first and most important step towards the development of true education—towards its wide diffusion as well as towards the improvement of its quality—is that those who have children to educate should seek out for them the best teachers—the best not merely in point of knowledge and mere technical skill, but the best in their capacity to direct their ideals and their affections. And I would say further that when they have found them they should give them the respect that the importance of their work warrants. What reason is there why a teacher on Rs. 100 a month should have less respect than a lawyer or merchant with Rs. 10,000? The teacher is exercising an influence which is out of all comparison deeper than theirs, for he is moulding the souls of men. If the community would rise to the thought of the dignity of a profession into whose hands this power has been committed, I think we should be on the way to the solution of most of the other problems of education of which we hear so much today. A community gets the kind of education which it deserves. If education is regarded as hack work, then hack work it will be. On the other hand, if it be regarded as a great and sacred service, there will not be wanting servants who will give themselves whole-heartedly and self-sacrificingly to it; nor will there be wanting the means to further them in their work.

I have taken this line of thought, because I consider that it is more worth while to speak about these things than to deal with education in its more technical

aspects. I have not been talking in the air. It was my lot to be educated in a country in which in those days there were many teachers, often poorly paid, who were utterly devoted to their work as a sacred calling. They were upheld by the confidence and respect of the community, and they had their reward not only in this but in the lives that they had helped to shape. The results of their work are evidence of the truth of what I have been trying to tell you. And I am convinced that for India in these days of perplexity and confusion the first need is not for better methods of teaching, better curriculum, better equipment, important though all these may be, but for devoted men and women to guide the citizens of the generations to come.

## CHAPTER VI.

### “THE EMPLOYER AND THE CITY.”

BY

MR. FRED STONES, OF E. D. SASSOON AND COMPANY, LTD.

In presenting this paper on the Employer and the City, I have first of all to point out that although I am in one way or another associated with most of the industries of the city of Bombay, it is primarily with the vast textile industry that I am connected, and it is really the Textile Employer and the City about which I propose to speak. No apology for this is required, for the future of Bombay undoubtedly lies in the success and further progress of the cotton textile industry.

Entering the harbour some months ago in the late evening, the city stood out like a chain of fairy lights and I could not help but wonder with the deepest anxiety what the future had in store for such a cosmopolitan city, knowing as I did, the long depression it had been called upon to face. I now feel that a wonderful future still lies before us and our children, providing we face the facts and overcome them as our predecessors did in the terrible period following the collapse of the Civil War in the United States of America.

Postulating that a better city can only be built if the industries of the city are prosperous and expanding, it is essential that we try and discover means to secure this prosperity and expansion.



In so far as the cotton textile industry of Bombay city is concerned, the position has been the subject of various enquiries and reports by the Government of India and the Local Government, but what is more important, it has been under the scrutiny of every employer in the industry.

Local employers have been paying a heavy tax in the shape of loss of capital and profit for the dubious privilege of staying in the industry and it is now a question of whether to quit the industry, or to endeavour to utilise the natural advantages of Bombay to enable the industry to win its way back and expand. Probably never in history has an industry had greater urge or greater necessity to co-ordinate all its efforts towards prompt achievement as the Indian textile industry has today.

In the past, we have adhered too slavishly to English practice—a good policy no doubt when Lancashire led the world, but today in the methods of manufacturing cloth, America and Japan have made such strides, that we must now take the experience of the whole textile world and adapt this experience to Indian conditions if we are to survive.

The wages being paid by local mills today are, exclusive of the cost of raw material, the bulk of the expenditure mills have to meet and at the same time make losses in doing so. On the other hand, unless the industry can pay adequate wages and afford satisfactory conditions of work, its human relationships will be as unsatisfactory as its lack of profits. The industry must therefore individually and by co-

operative effort, not only maintain wages, but increase them wherever possible, as a contribution to the raising of the standard of living, with which we shall secure better citizens and a better city.

This apparently idealistic and paradoxical position can only be realised by the co-operative effort of all parties concerned. The market of India for cotton textiles capable of being manufactured by Indian mills is boundless, as is pointed out by the Meek Report in no uncertain terms.

Rationalisation and co-operation I am convinced will solve our problem. Here I might define rationalisation in the terms of the International Labour Office:

“Rationalisation is understood as the methods of technique and organisation designed to secure the minimum waste of either effort or material. It includes the scientific organisation of labour, simplification of processes and improvements in the system of transport and marketing.”

Japan has shown the way, and by rationalisation, India can meet its own requirements to the entire benefit of the country. Today rapid progress is being made for the rationalisation of many Bombay mills whereby each mill will specialise, in the form of mass production, in cloths suitable for the country. What is required is a breathing space to enable this drastic reorganisation to take place. I need not here mention the advantages which would accrue to the employer and the consumer from such a drastic revolution of the local industry; they are obvious to us all, but I must deal with this proposed rationalisation from the

standpoint of other interested parties. Labour, for example, except in Japan, the United States and Germany, has opposed rationalisation, and in Bombay losses of over ten crores of rupees to the community were caused at least partly through such opposition. If such a scheme is to go through, it is obvious that we shall have to secure the co-operation of labour. Japan has done nothing that Bombay has not already done, the difference being that rationalisation in Japan has been carried out successfully on a large scale with less proportionate benefit to labour than in Bombay, whereas in Bombay it has only been possible to do the same on a small scale due to the opposition of labour, in spite of the local labour obtaining more monetary advantage than given in other countries.

The objections made by labour before the Fawcett Committee against rationalisation are met by the proposed new scheme, except in so far as their major objection, viz., the adoption of proper measures to meet the unemployment entailed, such as an unemployment insurance scheme, labour exchanges and absorption of the unemployed, if not in the same industry, at least in other ones.

The fear of unemployment is the biggest cause of labour trouble the world over and must be tackled if the whole-hearted co-operation of labour is to be obtained and the industry rationalised on the lines of Japan. We have the latter country held up to our admiring gaze and we are told to put our house in order persistently—often enough by people whose

inefficiency has led to many of our troubles. If a careful investigation was made by unbiased people, it would be found that the industry has done as much as could possibly be done to set its house in order in view of the opposition met with on all sides. and I feel that the two schemes for reorganising the industry, now under consideration, will remove the remaining points on which the industry is still rightly or wrongly criticised.

The Fawcett Committee made a hesitating recommendation on unemployment insurance in the cotton trade which was on the programme for discussion at the Millowners and Operatives Joint Conference, but was not dealt with owing to the declaration of the last strike. The Whitley Commission are studying the same problem and the Government of India have been addressed to ascertain on what lines they contemplate unemployment insurance to proceed in the cotton trade. Today the industry cannot contribute, but given a reasonable measure of protection and Government financial assistance in the near future, it may be possible to devise a scheme for unemployment benefits during the period of rationalisation. In Japan the problem was simple. The average time spent by an operative in the industry is under three years, so that any reduction in employment merely meant a reduction in the recruitment of labour. Similarly, the average wage in the spinning and weaving sections has not increased in recent years, although the number of machines tended has enormously increased, for example, although the

average number of looms tended in Japan has gone up from two and one-half to five and one-half, the wages per operative have not increased.

In Bombay the position is much more complicated. Our labour is largely made up of male labour who devote a life-time to their work in the mills and take periods of from one to four months leave every second or third year, which leave is spent in their native villages. It would obviously be cheaper for such labour as is displaced, to live in their villages, leaving only a small reserve in Bombay for extensions and absenteeism. This would therefore mean labour exchanges and supervisors all over those sections of the country from which our labour is recruited. Unemployment insurance in India is therefore a tremendous problem, not unsurmountable, but a vastly different problem to the one so easily solved by Japan.

Having touched on the subject of unemployment insurance, I would like to say a few words on the standardisation of wages, about which so much misconception exists. The demand for such a standardisation was originally made by labour before the Noyce Enquiry and was one of the seventeen demands set up by labour in the strike of 1928. Adopting the recommendations of the Fawcett Committee on the standardisation scheme, this scheme has now been revised to abolish the proposed cut in weavers' wages and consolidate all "dear food" allowances. It provides slightly higher wages today than the average wages ruling in the past and may now be considered a charter to labour. By its means any intelligent

workman or trades union official can ascertain the wage to be paid for any work done at any mills in the city, which is a decided advance on anything in the past. In the event of any section not giving the desired results, then a revision of the scheme is to be made after three months. Allowances are made for various types and conditions of machinery, but in spite of its advantages to labour, I fear that its adoption will cause trouble. Although the bulk of the employees will receive increased wages, a few operatives will have reduced wages and we shall have trouble from this small section and hear nothing of the benefits conferred on other employees.

A third point which can cause friction with labour is the development of trade unions. The local employers have not objected to trade unions when run on sound economic lines, and there is a big field of usefulness for citizens of Bombay of every community for service in the organisation of sound trade unions. Apart from any unemployment insurance scheme, there are other methods which can be adopted to solve the unemployment problem. The first is the working of two or more shifts, in other words, sweat the machinery and not labour. Double shifts would be a God-send to Bombay today in the aid they would give to solving unemployment and empty chawls, and the advantage would be big in reduced costs, as the local power company's schedule of rates provides much cheaper rates for longer hours of work.

Short time is no solution to our problem; it puts costs up and leaves the field free to competitors. It

may, however, be an advantage for labour to work a little shorter time on the principle of half a loaf to all is better than half the workers having plenty and the other half starving. I must confess I have not been able to give much thought to this method, as it only came to my notice very recently, in the suggestion of the cement plasterers of New York that they would like to work 6 hours per day for a couple of months to make work for their large quota of unemployed.

I have only dealt so far with the cotton industry and the city in relation to the provision of employment, but before leaving this subject I would suggest that with rationalisation there is a field for a new type of labour in the industry, viz., the educated middle classes.

Recent installations of humidifying and ventilating plants have shown that conditions inside a mill can be made far better than conditions existing outside, but so far the capital cost has been prohibitive. Efforts have been made to reduce costs and there is now every prospect of a reduction of at least 40 per cent. being made. If the co-operation of the Government of Bombay could be obtained, I think a bigger reduction still could be made and as a result of the installation of this plant, conditions of work would be so satisfactory that a new type of educated worker would be drawn to the mills, as higher individual wages would be obtainable for skilled work in a rationalised mill, combined with excellent working conditions.

Unemployment today in the mill area is prevalent,

but is not nearly so terrible as the unemployment among the middle classes whose best hope today is to eke out a miserable existence and maintain respectability as a clerk on a mere pittance.

In the past, the local textile industry has done much to improve the city and conditions of life here. Education in the mill districts a few years ago was almost confined to the education given to half-time workers at the mills. Half-timers are gone and with them the half-time schools, but it is essential that more and more facilities for obtaining a sound education be made available to the worker and his children.

Small branch technical schools are a necessity. There are twenty-nine first class technical colleges in Japan and we certainly should have means of giving technical training to the employees of local industries.

Local employers have been generous donors in the past to all schemes for education and to relieve human suffering, but funds are giving out today and welfare work is confined to individual mills providing creches, housing, provident funds, benevolent grants, co-operative societies, cheap grain shops and sundry other means of assistance to their workers.

Much good work is being done by mills in a campaign for the abolition of malaria from the city and every mill has its free dispensary and medical assistance.

For several years the local employer has been squeezed in the wrong place. The association of rich men, whose riches have often enough been obtained from sources other than the local mills, with the industry has made people think that the industry



itself is prosperous in spite of repeated statements to the contrary by those possessing sound knowledge of the condition of the industry. Today—far too late, people are realising that the industry is in a bad way; nevertheless, they still hope to squeeze more from it.

Speaking on the subject, "The advisability of methods other than high wages as a means of improving the conditions of the working classes" at Manchester, Mr. J. M. Keynes made a statement which I think is applicable to the local cotton industry. In short, he says, we ought not to starve the goose that lays the golden eggs before we discover how to replace that goose. We must tax the eggs of the goose instead. Government, Local and Central, and Municipalities have starved the local goose almost to death. Assistance by the Government three years ago would have saved the country untold wealth in other directions. Today that assistance will have to be much increased if the industry is to reorganise and expand. Cities all over the world offer special terms to industries to settle within their borders, but the Bombay City Fathers take every opportunity to starve the goose instead of helping it to produce the golden eggs from which all would benefit. The Bombay cotton textile industry is in a bad way and a better city is not feasible without the funds which successful industries can provide from profits.

May I now suggest how improvement can be obtained. Co-operation is essential between all interested parties. The Central Government can co-operate by giving assistance, for say five years, in

which to reorganise. They can provide protection from outside competitors by raising the revenue duty to 20 per cent. with a minimum specific duty of say three and one-half annas per pound. The Central Government can also help on the lines of guaranteeing a portion of the loans from the banks to replace funds now guaranteed by managing agents, for rationalisation purposes. This of course assumes that the much debated managing agency system is replaced by a board of directors. The system of managing agents needs no defence in this paper. It has been amply defended in the Report of the Industrial Commission, but in the opinion of some managing agents it is a bad system—bad for the managing agents. The following sacrifices have been made in recent years by the managing agents:

1. Managing agents' firms voluntarily gave up Rs. 18·01 lakhs Commission.

2. Agency firms incurred further losses of 85 lakhs as a direct result of financing the mills under their control, exclusive of a further loss of Rs. 34 lakhs in respect of loans made by agents to mills which are in liquidation.

3. No less than Rs. 200·7 lakhs advanced by managing agents had to be converted into capital following on capital reconstruction schemes of individual mills.

The Government of Bombay and/or the Central Government can also assist the local industry in the formation of a calico printing industry which will absorb some of the unemployed and broaden the range of cloths available for mass production by local mills.

Assistance can also be given in installing modern

ventilating plants and humidifying plants so that the conditions of employment can be improved. The mill industry can fairly claim assistance from the Government of India, as Government were partners in our profits in taking over four crores of rupees during the last seven years from the profits of the industry, in the shape of income-tax and super-tax. Needless to state, practically the whole of this sum was collected in the years 1922-1925. Apart from this connection, Government are trustees for the consumers and also must have the welfare of 150,000 workpeople to consider as this number of people at least would be unemployed if the local industry should fail.

Employers can do their share by one of two methods—either by rationalising the industry or co-operative buying and selling. Both methods will probably be used, and I will deal with rationalisation first. A large number of mills are examining in the most minute detail the possibility of this method, and given the breathing time by Government, a complete revolution of the local industry will be made, involving the discontinuation of the system of managing agents and the mass production of cloths in demand in India.

In the spinning section very little needs to be done, but in the weaving the rearrangement must be absolute re-equipment. In the mills producing the more varied cloth, there will still be room for the individual firms producing on a relatively small scale and catering for individual taste and small markets. These mills will benefit by co-operative buying and selling and a scheme of such a nature is also under consideration.

In return for Government assistance, the employer will have to be prepared for Government interference in his relation to labour, as far as wages, conditions of employment and sickness insurance, housing and welfare work are concerned. Given good-will on all sides, these problems should not be unsurmountable, but as previously pointed out, they are not so easy of performance as was the case in Japan or in new mills.

The consumer can co-operate by agreeing to the increased duty for a short period with the knowledge that internal competition will keep prices on an economic competitive basis as has been the case with yarn, and will lead to an expansion of the handloom industry. In other words more money will be kept in the country with better employment in which all will benefit.

Labour must be educated to realise that the whole question of success or failure is the ability to meet foreign competition, which in effect means lower costs of production. If this can be effected by re-organising the industry to lead to expansion such as to prevent unemployment and raise wages, then ungrudging co-operation should be given. I am convinced that given equal conditions, a Bombay weaver can do as much as a Japanese girl who spends less than three years of her life in the industry.

The Municipality can do its share by assisting the industry and not starving it. A prosperous industry means a prosperous city, but at present, it is handicapped by dear water supplies and absurdly high assessments.

Finally, I wish to reiterate that the keynote of my whole message is co-operation and education—only on these lines can we build a better city. We must think deeply and progress slowly, remembering the old aphorism, “The time of the wise is largely occupied in repairing the mischief caused by the good.”

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## CHAPTER VII.

# THE LABOURER AND THE CITY

BY

MR. S. C. JOSHI, M. L. C., Advocate.

The labour problems of Bombay are problems of great importance and in recent years they have attracted the attention of many. We are living in a time of industrial crisis. The ominous clouds of trade depression that have been hovering on the distant horizon for some years past are rapidly thickening over our heads, and if we do not rise to the occasion and do something to avert the impending danger, the consequences will be very serious, both from the national and economic point of view. The methods thus far adopted by the employers and the Government to avert the crisis are neither fair, proper, nor adequate. The pruning knife is used in the wrong place—particularly against the interest of the labourers, who have not been given their due share in the profits derived from their own labour. Labour's growing awareness of its economic miseries has further augmented the present situation. The result has been a number of strikes in the industries of Bombay. That Government is alert to this state of things is evidenced by the appointment of the Royal Commission to enquire into the conditions of labour. The terms of reference of the Commission, however, are narrow in sphere and limited to the conditions of Labour employed in

industries and plantations alone. The other group of labour is entirely excluded from the terms of reference. It is therefore the more necessary for the citizens to see that the interests of all labourers are properly safeguarded and that the labourer is given his deserts as a citizen.

The word "labourer" is a term applied to any individual who maintains himself by labouring with his hands, feet and mind; whether he is a peasant, a mill-hand, an artisan, a mechanic, a clerk, a school-master, a policeman, a railway worker, or a Government or semi-Government servant. Sometimes it is said that he is a labourer who depends for his maintenance on his own labour. That is his base and on that he stands. The actual ways and means adopted by individuals or groups of individuals may differ, and these may and do result in different sections or classes. Generally speaking, labour may be divided into two classes—manual and non-manual. Those who earn their maintenance solely with the help of their hands and feet come under the first category, while those who get the necessities of life through the use of their brains are called non-manual labourers.

Among the category of non-manual labourers will be included the subordinate services of the Government, such as clerks, and similar workers employed in firms or semi-Government bodies, as well as school teachers, etc. Those employed in mills, factories, railways, mines, docks, transport and fields, and those employed in various other capacities such as bidi shops or hawking, come under the category of manual labourers.

There is also another mode of classifying labour, viz., industrial and non-industrial.

Railways, textile mills, steamship companies, oil companies, the Port Trust docks, etc., employ the majority of the labourers in Bombay. The rest are absorbed in household work, shops, offices, and miscellaneous occupations. Some men, like hand-cart men, happily combine in themselves the two impossible roles of masters and servants. Some labourers earn their bread by doing odd jobs in the streets, and coolies with big baskets, called "patiwallas", can be cited as examples of this class. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to organise this mobile type of labourers, who carry all their effects with them. These itinerant workers have their poor meals at the nearest eating houses and take their well-earned rest on the hospitable foot-paths of the city, with their inevitable baskets for pillows. They have no particular master and hence the absence of any organisation among them. Their state of life is on the borderland of employment and unemployment.

The next question arising is the number of individuals belonging to the labouring classes in India, and in particular in the city of Bombay. It is not easy to answer this question. We can however, give an approximate answer for the city of Bombay. In the report recently submitted by the Government of Bombay to the Royal Commission on Indian Labour, the average daily number of persons employed in cotton, spinning, and weaving mills in Bombay city was given as 1,45,005. Adding to this the approximate



figure of dock, railway, and transport workers, persons employed in the bidi shops and hawking, lower grade servants of the Municipality, employees of firms and shops, schools and institutions, the figure of manual workers will very easily exceed about 50 per cent. of the population. Adding further the non-manual workers—the intellectual labourers of the city—the total figure will very easily absorb about 80 per cent. of the total population. Thus it can be seen that the subject “The Labourer and the City,” is a subject concerning the majority of the population of our city.

We shall next consider the recruitment of labour. In every country of the world labourers are drawn from the country-side, and India is no exception to this general rule. In almost all the towns and industrial centres workmen have been drawn from either the suburbs or the mofussil, and in Bombay a great majority of the workers come from the Konkan—a district which stretches along the coast of the mainland opposite to, and north and south of, the island on which this city is built. This tract is inhabited by different castes and creeds and consequently there is a fair admixture of all of these classes among the labourers who have migrated from their native villages.

Many of the immigrants have either very small resources at home or feel the desire of supplementing their incomes and hence they migrate to Bombay. There appears to be no indentured labour in Bombay. When the labour population of Bombay is so large it is most surprising that there should be no central

employment bureau to facilitate the search of those who are seeking employment. So far, no attempt has been made in this direction. At present those who are in want of employment present themselves at the gates of the offices, firms, shops, factories and mills, and it is considered a fortunate spell of fate if employment is obtained. Individuals, attracted by other workers' stories of money wages and city life, coupled with their own need for resources, are left helplessly unemployed in Bombay or compelled to accept any class of employment which they may come across.

Those immigrants who have no one to depend upon for food and shelter are in a bad fix. They have to subsist upon the coarse food of the inns and the stale articles of the hotels. They have no money to spend for lodgings and so the only course open to them is to sleep on the municipal pavements or on the open verandahs of generous gentlemen. Many have to live in dark and congested rooms and this naturally affects their constitutions. The result of this all is that the life which was full of energy and ambition in a village, now appears to be full of vexations and troubles.

Next to recruitment is the question of housing these labourers. Almost nowhere in India are the quarters for labourers erected by the concerns in which they work. The natural outcome is that many labourers have to reside in quarters or chawls erected by private owners in the central part of the Bombay island. The older houses, built in chawl formation, have their windows blocked with boxes and matting.

Ventilation is nearly absent. The land that can eventually be reclaimed from the sea is of course very moderate and limited, and with the demands of the city ever increasing, the housing problem in Bombay has become very difficult. The fact that so many chawls built by the Bombay Improvement Trust and the Development Department remain unoccupied, in spite of a reduction in rent, reveals a very curious state of affairs. It must be said that those chawls are built without any consideration of the needs and requirements of those for whom they were intended. Workmen find it quite impossible to pay the high rents and prefer, as a matter of economic necessity, to dwell in dark rooms in old and dilapidated buildings, with practically no ventilation and sanitation. The underground drainage fails to achieve what is necessary. Pools of water are present around the chawls. Alleys are often full of rubbish and a nasty smell is ever present. The alley-ways are narrow. An open drain in the centre is the place where dishes and clothing are to be washed. The water-pipe arrangements leave much margin for a cure. The sense of smell soon tells the location of latrines. The narrow space between the water-pipe and the wall is made the repository of rubbish. The corridors are very narrow and in bad repair and the wall may, in some cases, be broken by a small verandah. It is in this verandah and on the walls themselves that clothes are spread for drying, and sometimes even the iron-railings in the way are used for this purpose. Even the pavements on the roads are not excluded from this use. The rooms

in these chawls are quite dark and the inner rooms still darker.

The labourers are, as I have pointed out, compelled to occupy these quarters purely for economic reasons. To give a clear idea of the tenements of the labourers I shall quote a passage from the Memorandum submitted by the Government of Bombay to the Royal Commission on Indian Labour. The passage runs:

“According to the census of 1921, seventy per cent. of the tenements in Bombay were one-roomed tenements. The family budget investigation conducted by the Labour Office in the year 1921-22 showed that ninety-seven per cent. of the labouring classes live in one-roomed tenements. These tenements are to be found in single or double rows in buildings locally known as chawls. The average area per working class room is 103.6 square feet, giving 24.7 square feet for each individual. The height of the rooms is usually from 8 to 10 feet . . . . . According to the 1921 census, there were in Bombay city 3125 one-roomed tenements in which two or more families lived.”

The report of the Lady Doctor appointed by the Government of Bombay to enquire into the question of maternity benefits to industrial workers, which was published in the year 1922, contains an example of over-crowding. The Lady Doctor says in her report:

“In one room on the second floor of a chawl measuring some 15 ft. X 12 ft., I found six families living. Six separate ovens on the floor proved this statement. On enquiry I ascertained that the actual number of adults and children living in this room was 30.”

The Report of the Industrial Disputes Committee is very interesting in this respect. The Report says:

“Until an adequate supply of sanitary rooms let at rents within the means of the ordinary wage earner is available, every effort really to improve the condition of the operative classes is.

pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp. All the wages are swallowed in rent; there is no fixity of tenure; and the people will not, nor can they be expected to improve their homes."

I should like next to refer to the question of conditions in the working places. As I have already pointed out, a majority of the labourers are manual workers and I shall deal principally with the conditions of these classes. The attendance hours for manual workers are usually ten a day. During this time the worker is busily occupied, until in the evening, weary and fatigued, he leaves one congested building to enter into his dark and congested home. The day is spent and there is no time left for him to have a daylight stroll or a patrol in the open air of the busy town.

Even more pathetic is the case of women employed in industry. According to the Indian custom a woman is to cook for the family, and the women employed have to get up very early in the morning to fight for water, to cook food and cleanse the dishes, to wash the clothes, and to transact the whole business hurriedly enough to attend their work in time. A hard day's work in the factory, followed again by a programme similar to the one in the morning, and then perhaps at 11 p. m. or midnight a short nap, only to get up again at 3 or 4 a. m.; hard and persistent work coupled with the denial of even the requisite sleep and sanitary conditions under which to live—such conditions very soon undermine the constitution.

The standard of living of the labouring classes is of equal importance. Workers in the industrial areas are drawn not only from different castes and creeds, but

include both the so-called touchables and untouchables. To many, employment opens a new chapter on a higher level, for others the story is loss. The illiterate workman finds no unified standard of behaviour prevailing throughout the community into which he enters and he discovers further that even where there are groups who inherit the same standard, there is no power to enforce standards. He has now no fear of family or neighbours. The concern cares for his work and he cares for his pay. Whatever may be the depth of his degradation there is very little chance for his fellow-workers to exercise a control over him. Even supposing that a special group of his personal friends should keep aloof from him, the gambling hall, the race course, the liquor shop and the low recreation hall would offer him society. The fact that it is generally the strong and reckless who leave the village for labour in the city enhances the problem. The customary practices are abandoned due to changes in society; the character undergoes a change; the daily routine deadens the workers' susceptibilities—and the standard generally lowers day by day. The position of the workers who come single without their families is even more dangerous. The town life excites them and the over-crowded tenements afford opportunity for levelling down character.

Reckless frivolity, combined with insanitary dwellings, naturally culminates in sickness and disease. Plague has taken a big toll in the past. Though small-pox is being fought by wide-spread efforts to secure vaccination and re-vaccination, and though cholera

has now been checked, the labouring classes are not quite free from the same. Leprosy is somewhere present. Malaria is an everyday visitor and consumption, though present, is only recognised when the case is already beyond curable limits. The open bazaar, adulterated milk, and want of ventilation increase the seriousness of the diseases. Epidemics spread and there is then the necessity for medical treatment. To pay for this there is no provision. The meagre wage leaves no reserve for emergency. The only resource is the money-lender, who advances sums of money on the pawn of ornaments with a rate of interest bordering between 50 to 80 per cent., and sometimes even reaching one-hundred per cent. The interest is added to the capital and the latter increases at compound interest at regular intervals. To pay it back again there is no margin and the natural effect is the continuous sinking in debt and mortgages of property.

Here again, the women and the children are the worst sufferers, with a ruinous result not only for the present but for the future of India. The reason why India's death rate is gradually increasing is hidden in the above facts.

The schemes of social benefit are practically nil. The maternity benefit is not yet known to all Bombay industries. Co-operative credit societies are still uncommon among the manual labourers. Institutions for education and welfare have not been given due consideration, and the only relation of capital and labour is held to be the relation between supply and demand.

The growth of trade unions in India is of very recent

date and anything in the nature of a fully formulated association has only been known for a few years. To establish unions for the redressing of grievances was a thing known to workers in the beginning of the twentieth century. Such unions were started, but their vigour and energy always proved to wane away when the demands were either refused or partially granted.

Various unions have been organised throughout India, and in particular in Bombay. Government servants, semi-Government employees and industrial workers are organised, and at a Congress held on the 31st October 1920, the All-India Trade Union Congress was established. The Government of India had that year nominated Mr. N. M. Joshi as the representative of labour to the Washington Conference and a desire was created and fostered by those who were in touch with labour problems, for achieving a right to have this representative elected by labour itself. It was this that resulted in the conference of the representatives of the different trade unions, who soon affiliated themselves with the All-India Trade Union Congress. This was a good opportunity for those who were interested in labour affairs. Those who had the welfare of the labourers at heart spared no pains to establish trade unions on a sound basis. The movement spread and soon became popular with the industrial classes—a movement which was watched with considerable wonder by the employers.

Though the trade union movement could not achieve the material welfare of the labourers, it served to stir the hearts of the labouring classes, by depicting



to them their actual condition and setting before them an ideal goal, as well as a way to proceed. This is what the trade union movement has achieved in India thus far. It is, however, necessary in the interests of the workers to purge the movement of its undesirable elements and to adhere strictly to genuine trade union principles.

The usual mode, which is also considered to be the most effective mode, of getting the redress of grievances, is a strike—although it is a double-edged weapon which ought to be handled with extreme caution and only as a last resort. The strike has now become so familiar, particularly in Bombay, that it has lost its charm or novelty. There have been strikes of post-men, of tramway, dock and municipal workers and of mill-hands. At present there is a strike of the G. I. P. Railway workers. The number of strikes must be indicative of real grievances on the part of the workmen.

Thus far I have dealt with the importance of labour, the present condition of the industrial workers, the effect of the trade union movement and the use of the strike. I shall now turn to the steps necessary to make the great class of industrial workers real citizens.

To achieve material good we must devote our close attention to all of the factors involved, beginning with recruitment.

a) Recruitment bureaus should be established in the city and the country, and the entire recruitment should be made through these bureaus.

b) Special attention must be paid to the housing problem, and the Municipality must exercise a much

more strict control over the construction of chawls and houses, drainage and pipes. The roads and lanes should be broadened so as to remove congestion of houses. At suitable intervals open spaces, squares and parks should be kept for the use of the public. Latrines and public water taps should be increased in a fair measure to the population, and extreme care should be taken to keep them in a sound condition from a sanitary point of view.

*c)* Precautions must be taken to afford all sorts of medical help at the slightest demand. Increase in free hospitals and dispensaries is necessary and practical knowledge must be imparted by lectures and practical experiments.

*d)* Adult education should be made compulsory. At the present time the Government records show that more than 88 per cent. of the children leave school after the third standard and they soon relapse into illiteracy. Compulsory adult education is the only cure.

*e)* Side by side with the local Municipality, the employer must exercise a keener sense of interest for the welfare of his employees. Sanitation and accommodation in mill areas must be properly attended to. Working hours must be minimised and a short recess introduced for recreation. Betterment of wages is essential, and even more necessary is a re-adjustment of the time at which wages are due. A month is too long for the average workman to carry on, and a fortnightly or weekly payment would be very much appreciated. Maternity benefits should be given to women workers, and women should only be employed

at the lightest of duties. A reduction in attendance hours is necessary in the case of women workers that they may have more time for their home duties. Co-operative societies must be started, subscribed to, and conducted by competent persons to protect the workmen against the greedy money-lenders. Until total prohibition is introduced, all sorts of allurements and liquor shops must be removed from the vicinity of industrial concerns, and the liquor shops should close at six in the evening instead of at 9.30 p. m. Liquor shops should also be closed on pay days and other holidays in order to check the temptation of drinking on the part of the workers. In short, a considerable change is necessary in the viewpoint of employers towards their workmen. Labour and not the capital should be considered the primary factor and a greater share of profits must be paid to the workers by way of starting schemes and societies for their good and welfare. Schemes of health and sickness insurance must also be undertaken.

It is the general rule that schemes of benefit for the poorer classes, however worthy they may be, are delayed because of the reluctance of employers to spend money upon such schemes. The only remedy for this condition is compulsion, and compulsion can only be brought about by legislation. The representatives of the masses who sit in the legislative bodies will not make an attempt in this respect unless they are truly representative of the people for whom such reforms should be undertaken. To achieve this end, and remove the present injustice, an unrestricted

adult suffrage is necessary. It is, however, a matter of regret that though this measure is realised to be necessary it does not get the requisite support. Even Rao Bahadur Bole's bill for lowering the suffrage right to Rs. 5 rental, failed in the last sitting of the Bombay Legislative Council. This is a great injustice and demands a speedy remedy. A denial of civic rights to those who are the residents of the City and compose more than half of its population is a grievance which must be redressed, if real citizens are to come from these classes.

If our city is to live up to its proud name, a distinct change in outlook is absolutely essential on the part of those employers who continually view labour with the eye of suspicion. With a discontented labour population no city or nation can hope for substantial progress. A contented labour population furnishes a basis for progress, and will better equip our city to take her full share in the building of the nation.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### “RELIGION AND THE CITY”

BY  
MR. CLIFFORD MANSHARDT,  
of the Nagpada Neighbourhood House.

The New Jerusalem, as described in the Biblical book of Revelation, was a city the like of which has not yet been experienced, a city which since the time of Thomas More has been known as Utopian. The city, as seen by the ancient seer, “had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, . . . . on the east three gates; on the north three gates: on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.” The wall of the city “was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones . . . . And the twelve gates were twelve pearls;” and as the city was measured, it was said to lie four-square: “the length and the breadth and the height of it *were* equal.”

In this old picture of an ideal city, fantastic perhaps to many of us, I can discern the modern city of Bombay—Bombay in a sense as it is, and the Bombay that really might be.

The Bombay which the most of us know and cherish is also a city of many gates. It is a hospitable city, welcoming strangers from the north, from the south, from the east, and from the west. The Gateway

of India is symbolic of the open door to strangers from beyond the seas, while every highway and railway is an invitation to workmen to enter in. Bombay, like the city of the vision, is also a city of gold. From the days when the open sea first lured the traders to lands afar, to the more recent time when the development of cotton and subsidiary industries has led to new achievement, Bombay has gathered gold. In a scant one hundred years the city has prospered and expanded far beyond the rosiest dreams of her early inhabitants. Unfortunately, however, in their desire for possessions, the residents of Bombay have not always fixed their attention upon the highest values. Gold is good, but it is a perverted sense of human values which makes gold God. Neither man nor a city can "live by bread alone". There is also a spirit, the cultivation of which is essential to the well-being of any people.

The dream of the four-square city is both a hope and a challenge. Length, breadth and height. Vision, tolerance and reverence. If a city is to be great it must have men who are far-sighted, men of broad sympathies, and men of high purpose. To assist in the development of such men is the function of religion.

It is not my intention on this occasion to enter into a detailed discussion of the meaning of religion. Religion in the course of its history has manifested itself in many ways and has been variously interpreted. Differ as we may regarding the respect which should be paid to outstanding religious personages; differ as we may about creeds and forms of worship; there is

one point, I believe, at which we may find a common meeting and that is the widespread desire of man so to adjust himself to his world as to live the richest life of which he may be capable. For some the way to attainment is the way of faith. For others it is the way of works. Others travel the way of discipline and austerity, while others choose the path of knowledge. The road travelled is of less importance than the result achieved.

There is no arguing the point that religion helps men to see. The great religious leaders of the past have been the men who have seen more than their fellow men. Moses, Isaiah, Zoroaster, Jesus, Buddha and Mahomed—all were men with a greater degree of vision than that which was accorded their fellows. They shared the same environment as their neighbours, but their eyes were keener, their insight deeper. And the modern prophets of religion—the men who have fought slavery, war and social injustice wherever found—have also been men of vision.

The need of Bombay today is for men who see. Modern Bombay is largely a creation of industrial civilization. In the city in which I lived before coming to India, the city of Chicago, it is the custom to build great business structures of tremendous height, commonly known as "skyscrapers". Now before a skyscraper can be erected in Chicago it is necessary to sink great piles into the swampy sub-soil and to pour in tons and tons of concrete that the foundations of the structure may be sound. And then, when the building is finally erected, it stands secure. The

Bombay which we see and admire today appears to be well-built, but one cannot but question, "Are the foundations of the city sound? Has not perhaps the material well-being of the city proven itself to be too heavy a superstructure for the city's spiritual foundations?"

The growth of Bombay from a palm covered village to a great industrial centre is a most romantic story. The introduction of steam and electricity began a transformation which even yet is still in its infancy. The material resources of the city expanded and trade and commerce succeeded in absorbing the energies of an ever-increasing army of men. The quest for money became so fascinating that it overshadowed the more fundamental quest for things of the spirit. The whole philosophy of last century industry was a materialistic one. Religion had its place, but its place was not conceded to be a commanding one. It could concern itself with anything it desired if it only kept silent upon the moral issues raised by the spread of industrialism. As Bishop Williams has well said, Religion was to bring ambulances to the foot of the cliff, but it was not to attempt to prevent men from falling over the edge. It was to mop up the floor, but by no means should it attempt to turn off the water. "It was to deal with consequences solely, not to seek out and remedy causes. Individual behaviour in personal relations, charity, alms-giving, relief and rescue—these were its concern, but never a word was it to utter about justice and righteousness in the larger relations of life." It was to be a bromide, a soporific, a sort of "moral police



force." Altruism and idealism had no place in the prevalent philosophy of industry. Self-interest was both its motive and its driving power.

And the result was what? The exploitation of men, women and children for the sake of profits. Rows of new factories and rows of ghastly slums. 'Thousands of gleaming machines, mostly unguarded, and thousands of young labourers being turned into machines. Long hours, unsanitary conditions, starvation wages, despair, confusion, and even death. A sordid picture, to say the least.

Far-seeing men saw the inevitable result and launched their protests. Industrial and social legislation was introduced. Hours of work were regulated, women and children were given a measure of protection, conditions within factories were improved, and more attention was paid to sanitation and to the housing of the workers. The work of such agencies as the Bombay City Improvement Trust and the Development Directorate can be criticised at many points, but it certainly registers an heroic attempt to deal with one aspect of the total situation. Then came the war, and not only the industrial structure but the whole social structure trembled. For thinking men there can be but one lasting remedy—a re-building of the foundations.

Bombay city today needs desperately men of social vision. We need industrial pioneers—men who are willing to risk profits for the sake of men. I do not stand before you as an expert in industry, but I do claim to speak with some authority in the field of

human relationships. If any social group is to prosper it must be through an exchange of services. Two social attitudes have held the attention of men since the beginning of human history. The one attitude is that of giving. The other is that of taking. The family is our best example of the *giving* type. Within the family circle each member makes his contribution to the welfare of the family as a whole. The *taking* attitude gives as little as possible but gets as much as it can. It uses other people for its own ends in the endeavour to secure personal enrichment. Taking a short range view of things it would seem that a policy of self-interest is the only sound policy for a business man to pursue. But no man can enrich life through the destroying of life. A society in which every man seeks to exploit every other man is not the kind of society in which the most of us would choose to live. It requires no exceptionally keen student of social problems to link poverty, a large number of our prevalent diseases, vice and crime with a system which exploits one man for the gain of another. The whole system of exploitation is a survival of the day when force was king and each man looked upon every other man as his enemy.

The only sound motive for present day business is the motive of service. The employer who claims to be enlightened must be socially conscious, feeling a sense of responsibility for those with whom he is associated. He need not renounce profits, but profits must be a means to social usefulness and not the end. And once social usefulness is accepted as a standard of

action, the human problems connected with industry begin to solve themselves.

I can hear the practical man saying, "An impossible ideal"; but in the field of religion all things are possible. A man not only lives in the present but by his imagination he may also live in the future. It is no more foolish to talk about social change than to talk about the improvement of balloons or airplanes. Social improvement may be more difficult, but difficulty is but a challenge and a stimulus to action.

Bombay needs employers with vision, but along with employers she needs employees who can see. The story has often been told of Sir Christopher Wren inspecting the work of his builders. Approaching a group of three workmen engaged in the same task he inquired of the first, "What are you doing?" "I am hauling stone," answered the man, thinking to himself of the hard physical labour which his task involved. "And what are you doing?" asked the architect of the second. "I am earning ten shillings a day," replied the worker, and the thought of gain was to him some compensation for the monotony of his task. "And you," said Sir Christopher to the third, "What are you doing?" "I am building a cathedral, Sir!" and the note in his voice was a note of exultation. To this man, work was much more than drudgery or making money. He was a sharer in a great co-operative enterprise. It is this ideal that we would hold forth for all workmen.

As Principal Jacks has so well pointed out, "Good workmanship ... is the foundation of good citizenship ...

Industrial civilization ... stands or falls by the quality of its industry, or workmanship—that is, by the quality of what its members do for themselves and for their neighbours in the course of their daily work, the quality of what they say to one another in the course of their literary, oratorical, or homiletic activities having little value except in so far as these fine sayings get themselves embodied in exchangeable commodities or in mutual services of a corresponding fineness.” As I understand these words, the Principal is making a plea for labour to give weight to its demands by putting forth a high quality of work—by giving full value for value received. In Bombay I believe we need to learn this lesson. Too many of our workmen are wholly concerned with “hauling stone” or “earning ten shillings a day.” They are giving no thought to the quality of their workmanship. They see themselves simply as under-privileged drudges and not as builders of cathedrals.

Religion helps men to see life whole. I am not one who would offer religion to any man for the sake of keeping him quiet. But I do believe that when a man once glimpses his own life as a part of the Divine life and his own work as a part of God’s work, that life takes on a new meaning. The commonplace becomes exalted, for that which is of God is no longer common. Ideal working conditions cease to be looked upon as of supreme importance, the fundamental question for the workman is, “Am I doing my best? Is the work that I am turning out really honest work?” And if the answer is “Yes”, then the way is prepared for

better working conditions and other equitable demands, for the workman himself is standing on solid ground.

The message of religion is for no one section or class. It is for the whole people. To every man and woman there comes the call to see. Look out upon this city! Do you simply see buildings and a teeming mass of humanity, or do you see persons—individuals with needs and with desires? Do you accept the city as it is, or do you dream of the city which is to be? I myself am not ashamed to be a dreamer. As I look out across this crowded section of Bombay I picture a *new* Nagpada, new in fact as well as in name. I see filthy slums demolished, narrow alleyways made into broad highways, a garden with green grass where mothers and children can breathe, and a general improvement in sanitation. I see little babies having a fair chance to grow to healthy childhood and manhood; a region purged of malaria and preventable disease; the segregated district abolished and our children spared from the flagrant exhibition of commercial vice that is now their daily portion. I see an intelligent attack upon the causes of poverty and unemployment. I see our boys and girls being educated, not only to pass examinations, but to play a full part in our everyday life. I see these things and I believe they can be brought to pass. The most of the evils confronting us in Bombay today are man-made, and that which is made by man can also be changed by man. It can be changed—if our people will really see.

So much for the length of the city. The second

dimension is that of breadth. The breadth of the city is measured by its tolerance. Bombay is a tolerant city. The presence of so many varying racial groups within the city is a constant witness to the fact. Here in the Nagpada section alone we have Jews, Mahomedans, Hindus, Afghans, Persians, Arabians, South Africans, Europeans and Americans. We have Indians from almost every section of India. We have men of many creeds and of varying colour. We have men of different religious, racial and social ideals. And that which is true of Nagpada is true of many other parts of Bombay. The story of the Parsi community alone is a romance in tolerance. But I sometimes wonder whether the tolerance which we have in Bombay is really the highest form of tolerance. It seems to me that there is a distinction between letting people alone to go their own way and really attempting to understand these people. There is the so-called tolerance which ignores people different from ourselves and the real tolerance which sees differences and sees in these differences sources of strength worthy of the highest appreciation. It is the let-alone "pseudo-tolerance" which I believe is responsible for our periodic communal disturbances.

During ordinary times the varying communities live side by side having as little to do with each other as possible. As long as no untoward incident occurs there is a state of peace. But let some incident arise which arouses communal feeling and the strife is on. The whole relationship is conducted on what we may call a sub-intelligent level, that is, the whole

attitude of one group toward another is determined by instinct and feeling instead of by intelligence.

True tolerance is based upon intelligence. It does not ignore differences. It capitalises them. Just as the true beauty of the diamond is only revealed by the play of light upon its various facets, so the true beauty of the social group is only revealed by the unique contribution of each constituent member. The man who would be truly tolerant seeks to understand.

There is a story in the Hebrew scriptures about the call of the prophet Ezekiel to his prophetic office. He, along with others of his countrymen, was an exile in a distant land. Being of a reflective temperament he used to spend much time apart from his companions engaged in deep thought. One day as he sat by the water's edge his attention was attracted by a storm cloud forming in the north and advancing toward him across the plain. In that cloud he saw a vision of God and obtained the consciousness of his call to the prophetic office. He felt that it was God's will that he should act as a prophet to his fellow exiles, but he did not know how to translate his call into a definite plan of work. Accordingly, as he himself tells us, he returned to the community of captives and there as he mingled with his fellows, as he "sat where they sat", the nature of his mission became clear. Not apart from men, but in their very midst was the will of God revealed.

And if we in Bombay are to be intelligently tolerant, we too must sit with our fellows, mingle with them, and put ourselves in their place. To some of us is given the privilege of everyday contacts with

many groups, but to all of us there is given the privilege of developing a constructive imagination. To a few artists and dreamers imagination may be a gift, but to the great mass of people it comes, if it comes at all, as the result of education.

The most of us have undoubtedly come through schools in which imagination was discouraged. Our minds have been curbed instead of stimulated. We are the victims of a system which, because it is dealing with large numbers, subordinates the development of individual personality to the regimentation of the many. The way out is difficult and yet it does seem that if people are the most important thing in the world, our schools must sooner or later give a larger and larger place to a study of the art of living. This does not necessarily mean a radical change in the subjects studied in the schools, but it does mean a change in the approach to them. Such subjects as history, geography and literature have social values which as yet have been scarcely touched upon.

Take history for example. History is not simply the study of politics and wars, it is the story of how people have lived together, the adjustments they have made toward life and their social attitudes. Its value for us is the contribution which it makes toward the solution of similar present day problems. The people of the past had their class conflicts. They too were thrown into contact with people different from themselves. And the way in which they dealt with these situations is of real value to us right here in 20th Century Bombay. We are a part of that



which has gone before and should profit by our heritage.

Or take the subject of geography. It is geography which shows to us the dependence of each upon the other. In the words of Dr. Neumann, "City and country need one another; so do land and land. Good and ill in any part of the world produce their effects elsewhere as well . . . . All the people of the earth depend upon one another for the interchange of ideas. No country today dares remain provincial or content with the thought of its own superiority over other lands . . . . All the countries on the globe can learn from one another. No lesson is more urgently required than that differences do not necessarily mean superiority or inferiority. Each country . . . . has something unique to give to every other; and only as each seeks to understand, to respect, and to encourage the special best in its fellows, will its own best gifts be promoted."

A child educated to this point of view faces his world with a receptive mind. He is ready to appropriate good from whatever source good may be available, and he also feels a responsibility to give to others of his best. Now it is obvious that if respect and understanding are to amount to anything they cannot simply remain in the abstract, they must find concrete expression. And the wise teacher will find the means for that expression right near at hand. If the nations of the world are inter-dependent, so too are the people living in the same city. Differences there are between the people, but the differences between Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsis and Jews are the type of

differences which, when properly understood, may be a real source of strength to the city as a whole. And until they are understood the city itself must suffer loss.

But valuable as are the contributions of history and geography to the cultivation of social imagination, the contribution of literature is still more valuable. The child's love for a story prepares him to make those flights of fancy which when later disciplined are the finest type of constructive imagination. The writers whose works we study in the schools had no thought of writing their materials for use in the passing of school examinations. They were endeavouring to deal with life, and the alert teacher will use their material as a means of interpreting life. Nor will he stop there. He will direct his students' reading, open up new fields of thought, seeking at all times to further wider understanding and, through understanding, the highest tolerance.

And now lest I be reminded that my subject for discussion is the contribution of religion and not education, may I say in explanation that idealised education is religious. The time or place is of small moment. Whatever enriches life and stimulates to the enrichment of life is religious. Our schools without the least trace of sectarian emphasis can be our most effective teachers of practical religion.

Thus far I have been talking about a long future, but to those of us who are adults there is the same opportunity. The best actor is the man who can best put himself in the place of the character whom he would portray. And the best citizen is the man who

can best live imaginatively in the life situations of others. The most of us spend so much time in thinking about ourselves that we have no time left to try to share the experiences of our neighbours. But social imagination, like other achievements, must be gained through practice. Let a Hindu try to picture himself as a Mahomedan, or vice versa. Let a high caste man try to see himself in the position of a low caste man. Let the labourer try to visualise himself as an employer, and let the employer live imaginatively among his employees. Let a man of privilege try to picture himself in the place of the underprivileged. Let the reader of newspapers attempt to put himself in the position of those who have made mistakes and see what he would have done under similar circumstances. The task is not so difficult, but it does require the exercise of considerable will power. Certain it is that the culture of imagination will make our common life the happier. It will lead us out of ourselves, release us, and will speed the welcome day when this city—first in show of wealth—shall be known throughout the whole of India as the first in tolerance.

We turn now to the third dimension of the city, the dimension of height or reverence. By reverence I do not mean simply the respect which the citizens show toward certain sacred objects or persons, I also mean the respect which they show toward one another. Reverence for sacred objects or persons too often fails to find its issue in life. The worshipper himself experiences an emotional reaction or feels a sense of duty done, but there the matter ends. His attitude

toward his fellowmen is much the same as it was before. The author of the book of John in the Christian New Testament recognised this situation when he said, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." For this ancient thinker the path to God led through the world of men and I believe the path to God still lies through the world of men.

Just as there is a uniqueness in every social group, so there is also a uniqueness in every man. The most of us find it relatively easy to respect those whom we recognize as superior to ourselves or perhaps on our same general level. We find it difficult to respect those whom we regard as inferior to or weaker than ourselves. Our trouble is due to our lack of vision. We fail to see the potential qualities of the underprivileged or the weak. But we must see these qualities! In the words of Professor Adler: "In seeking for the highest good, I cannot separate my quest so far as it concerns myself from the same quest so far as it concerns others. On the way to the highest goal, I must take my fellow-beings with me. For the higher life—the germ of which exists in every man—is adequately represented by no man. The one represents more adequately some particular aspect of it, another a different aspect. It follows therefore, that no one can love the higher life unless he seeks to promote it in others as well as in himself. All the so-called duties flow from the principle of the unity and inter-dependence of

humanity in their effort toward the attainment of their goal.”

And I believe as men recognise this fact; as they see the worth in all men; as they work together for the attainment of common ends; that God himself appears. The purposes of men at their best reveal the purposes of God. The sincere desires of men are a revelation of the desires of God. Whenever men in their own hearts earnestly yearn for the good that is to be; whenever they have a passion for justice and righteousness and a hatred of injustice and sham; whenever they rise out of themselves and give of their best for others—then God is very near.

The height of the city is the loftiness of the city's ideals. The ideals of the city can be no higher than are the ideals of its citizens. Every religion that is followed in Bombay today makes the demand upon its adherents for higher living. Our problem in its finality becomes a personal one: the way in which you and I individually are responding to this call.

The ideal city as seen by the ancient seer had need of neither sun nor moon to lighten it. Its radiance was such that it could not be hidden. And as the city of Bombay becomes more symmetrical; as its vision becomes matched by its tolerance, and its tolerance is equalled by its reverence, it too will glow with splendour. It will stand as a city upon a hill, a city which cannot be hid.

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